

A decorative border made of yellow and black scrollwork surrounds the text. At the top is a horizontal banner. Below it, on the left and right sides, are vertical scrolls that curve downwards. At the bottom, there are two large, symmetrical scroll-like shapes that curve upwards towards the center.

Flowers of the Needle, Volume IV

da Sera, Domenico

Opera Noua

1546

A Garden of Delightful Designs for
Needlework, Gathered from the Most
August and Ancient Books Writ upon
The Excellency of the Needle; with
which You may Devise and Work
Most Beautiful and Glorious Works
in Various Kinds of Embroidery,
which shall bear Witness to Your
Industry and Skill.

Compiled and Annotated by
Mistress Kathryn Goodwyn, OL
(C. Kathryn Newell)
And Newly Reissued In this Form in 2012

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da Sera, Domenico

Opera Noua, 1546

INTRODUCTION

The title of Domenico da Sera's 1546 work *Opera nova composta...* translates as "A New Work Composed by....". The rest of his run-on title is addressed to young women (damsels), instructing them that the book contains all sorts of patterns for sewing, embroidery and other styles of needlework. He also makes an interesting reference that silk weavers might find the designs of use as well.

This collection is a marvelous treasure trove of charted patterns. There are linear (i.e. "free-form") designs on a gridded background, which appear to be for a form of needle lace. The rest of the patterns (and there are many!) offer up a fascinating repertoire. The patterns range from geometric and foliate motifs, to fruit (grapes), florals (two patterns of columbines, one of stylized pansies), and birds, and on to styles now popular as "Celtic Knotwork".

One pattern, christened "Wrench and I beam", was recharted by Countess Ianthé d'Averoigne in her work *The New Carolingian Modelbook*. I have used another of da Sera's patterns in my Assisi learning sampler and my associated article, "Stalking the Wild Assisi". I extracted a small "inset" of one of his designs to make a needle book.

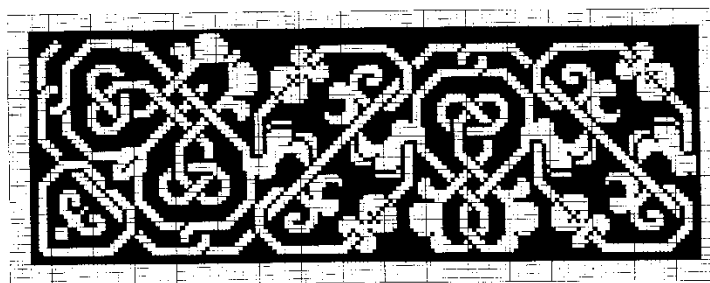


Chart © 1998, C. Kathryn Newell

This da Sera voided motif is also presented in F. Lipperheide's 1881 *Leinen Stickerie* pattern collection, itself edited and reissued by K. Epsetein as *Old Italian Patterns for Linen Embroidery*, in 1996.

As in the sample I regraphed (above) some of da Sera's charted designs seem to have been done with the idea of voided work in mind. Voided work is a technique whereby the background is filled in with solid single-color stitching (using a variety of

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techniques) and the design area is left on bare cloth. The result is a “negative” of normal cross stitch. The large number of surviving pieces of voided work seen in museums and private collections seem to indicate that this technique was a favorite with Italian needle workers of the 16th and 17th centuries.

There are two overtly religious designs contained in this work. One is of the initials “I.H.S.” seen contained in a strapwork style structure. The other is the final design of a brocade-style pattern bearing what I have heard referred to as a “pomegranate” motif as the main design. Within this pomegranate shape are the initials “I.H.S.” This design is virtually identical to the one in the preceding book by Zoppino. However Zoppino chose to fill the center of his brocade style motif with evenly spaced dark squares rather than the religious motto.

The publication information is contained on the front cover – that da Sera’s work was published in Venice by Matio Pagan, who appears to have been sharing a workshop or living quarters with a fletcher! I have come across one or two needlework pattern design books by Matio Pagan while researching other embroidery techniques. I once searched for his name on the Web and found he had printing concerns in a large variety of scholarly fields.

-Kathryn Goodwyn, 2011

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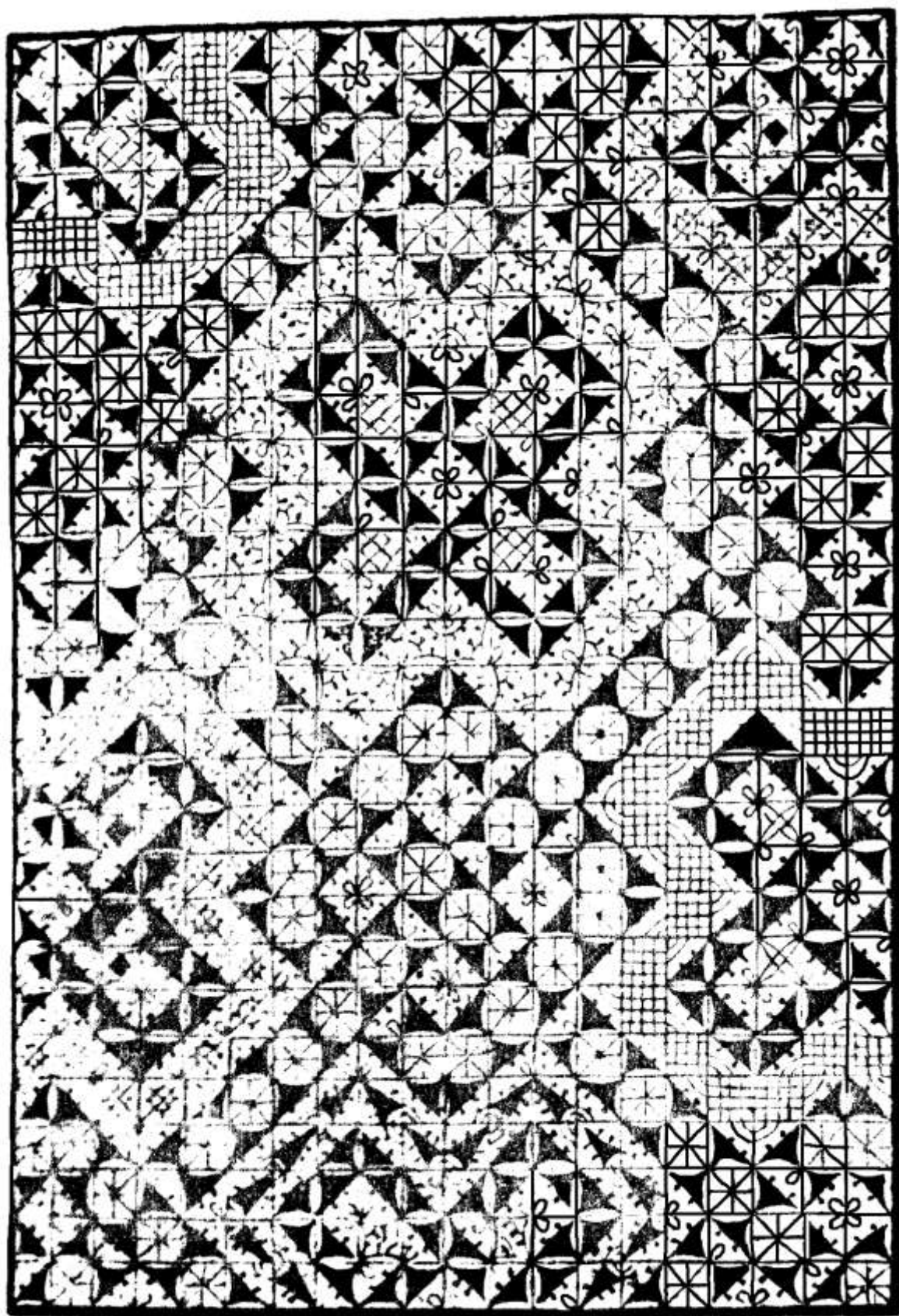
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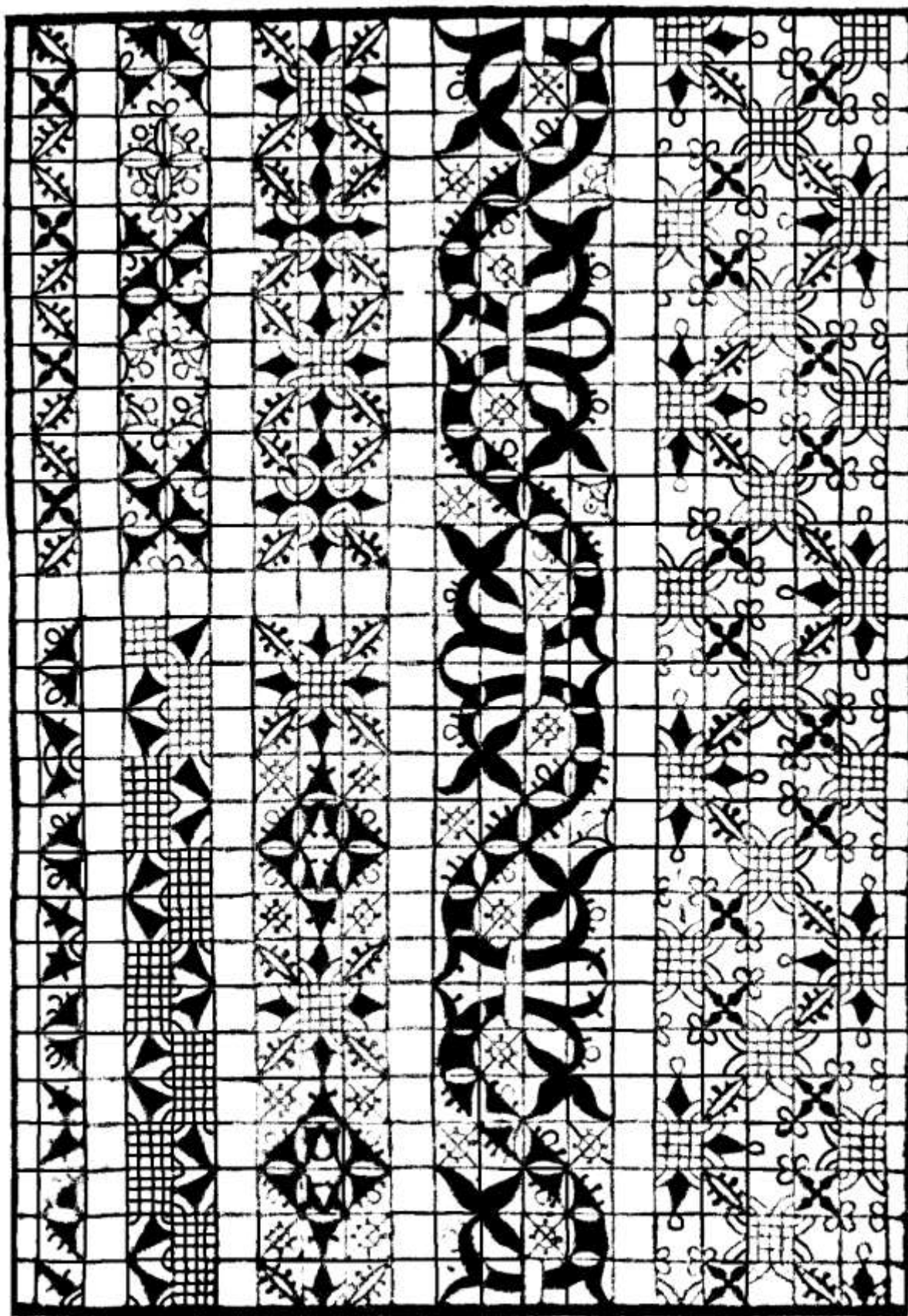
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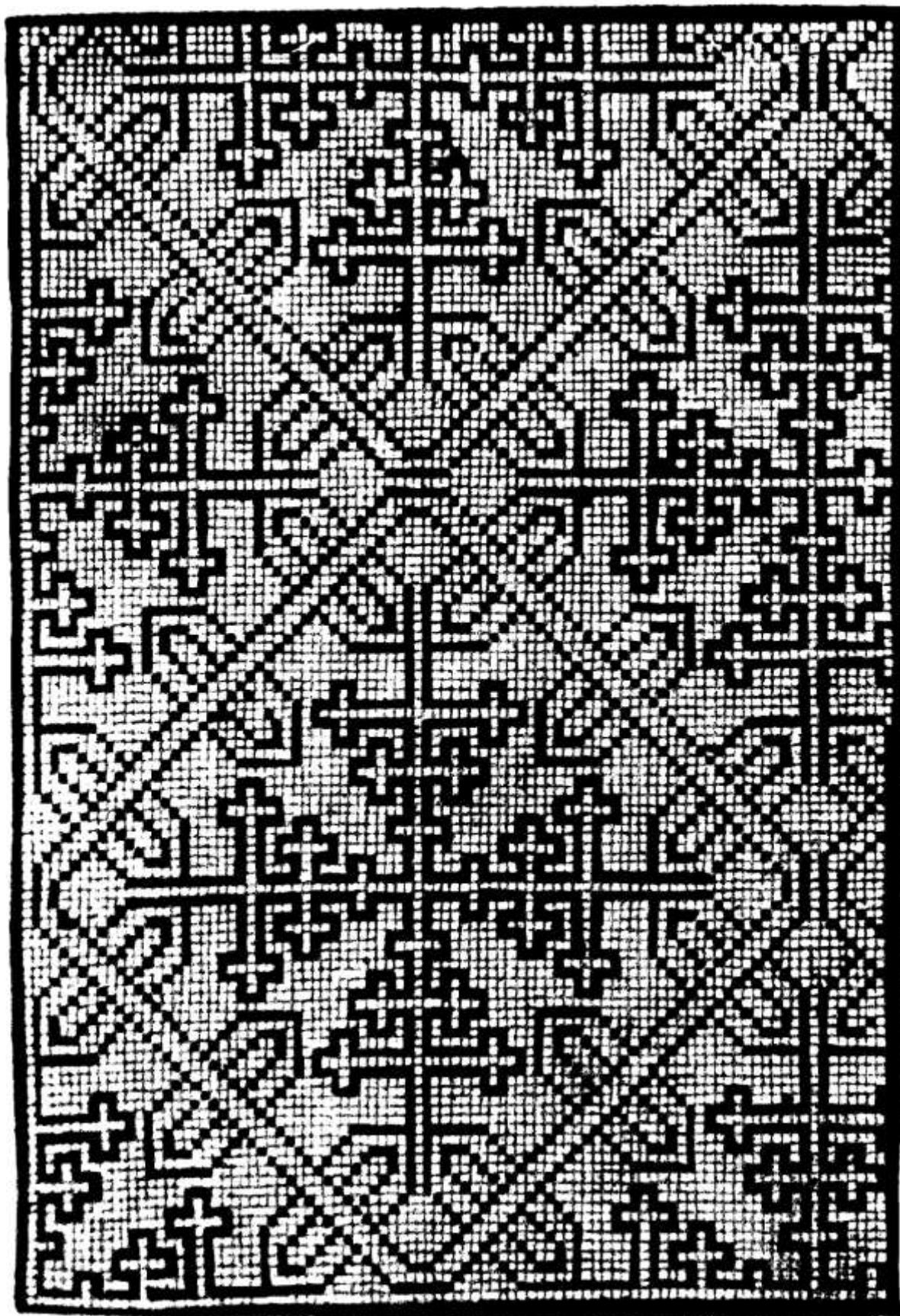
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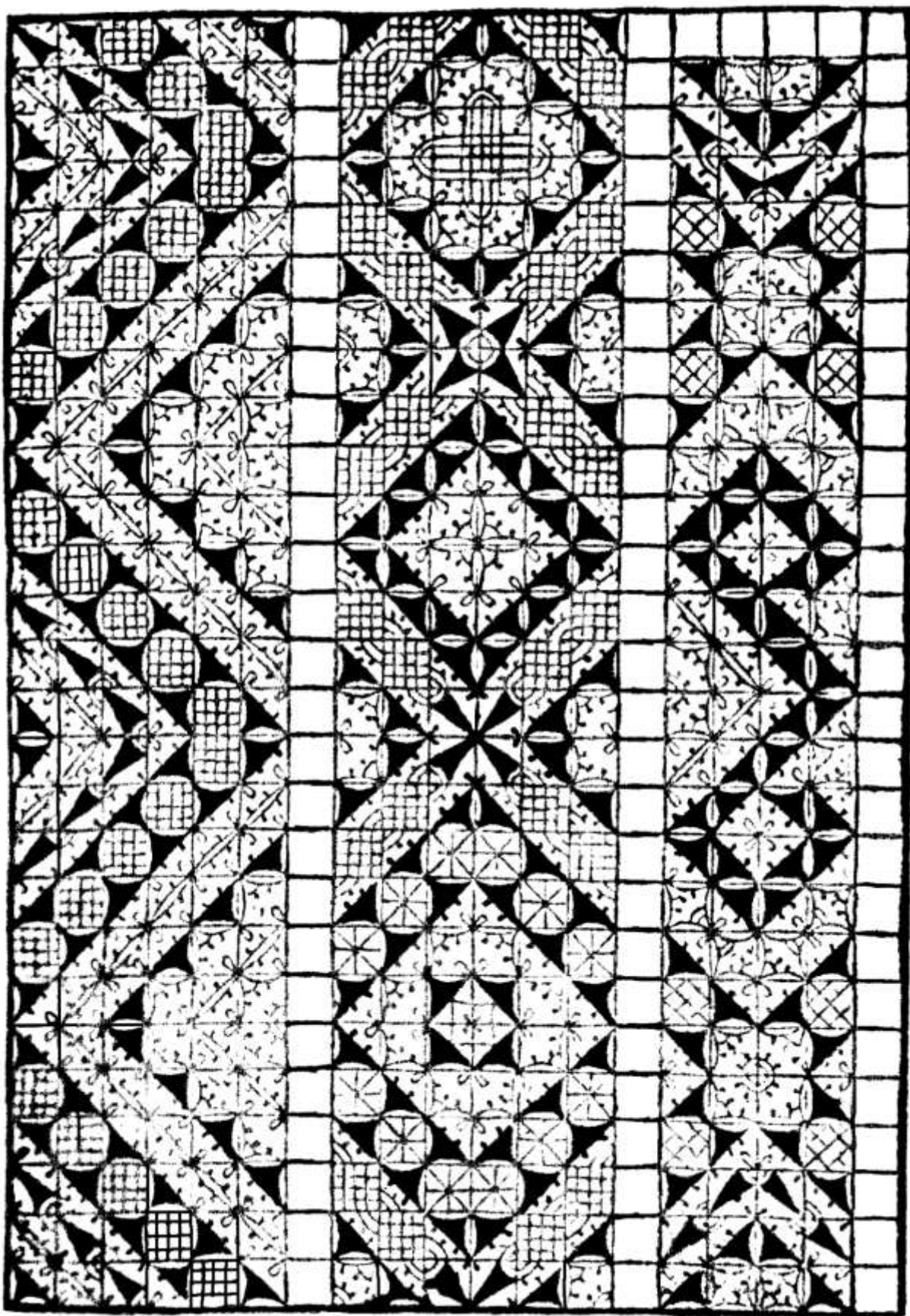
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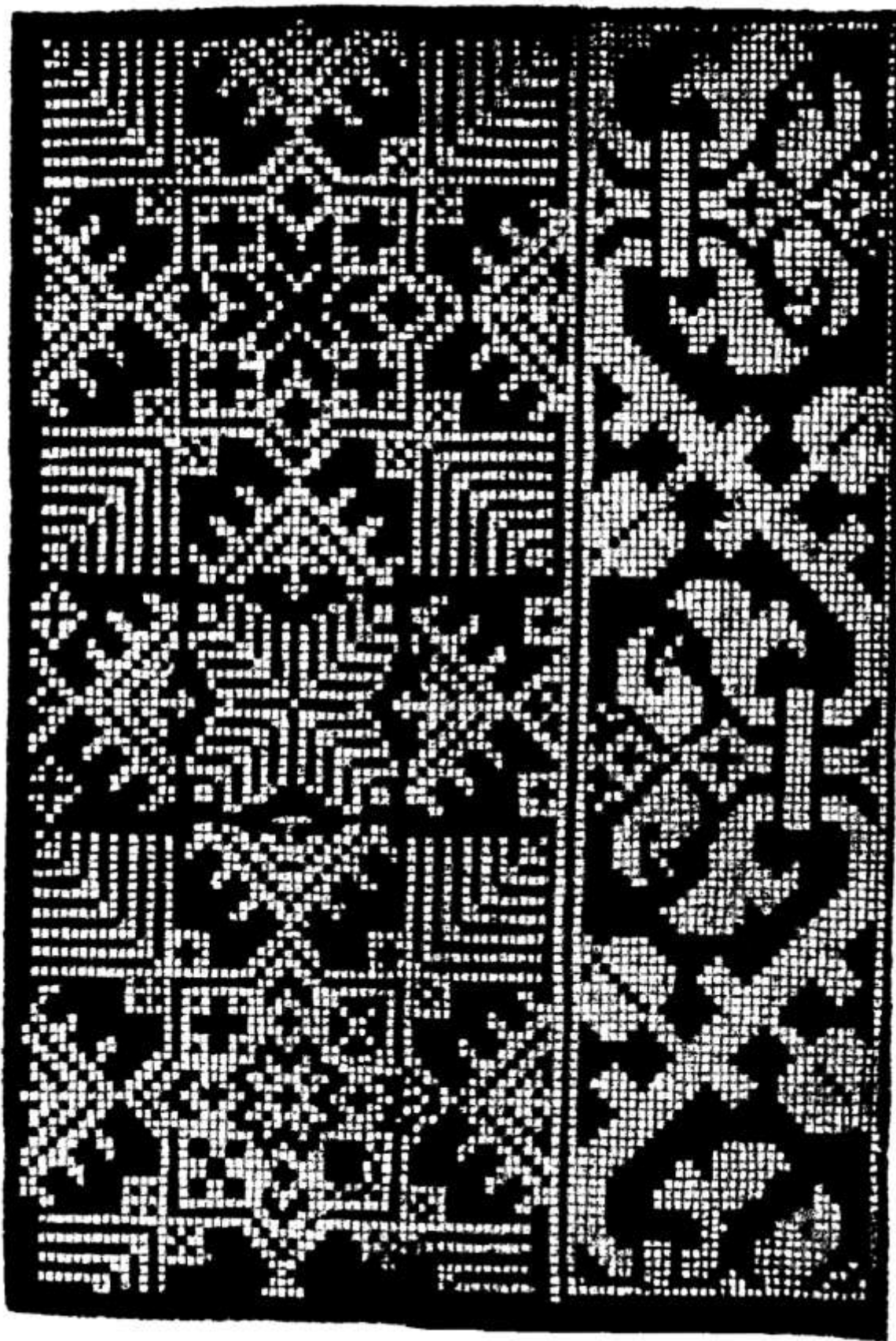
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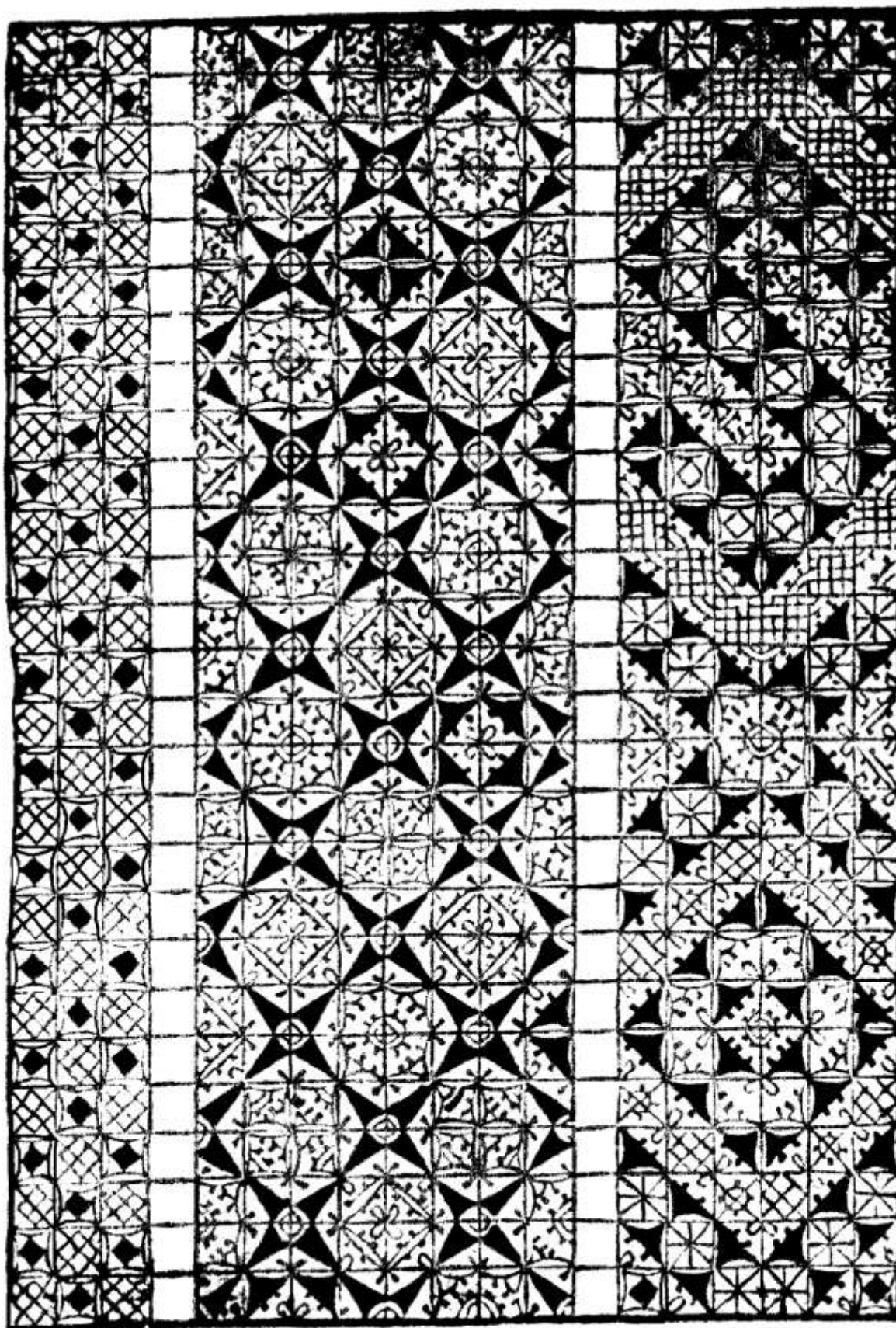
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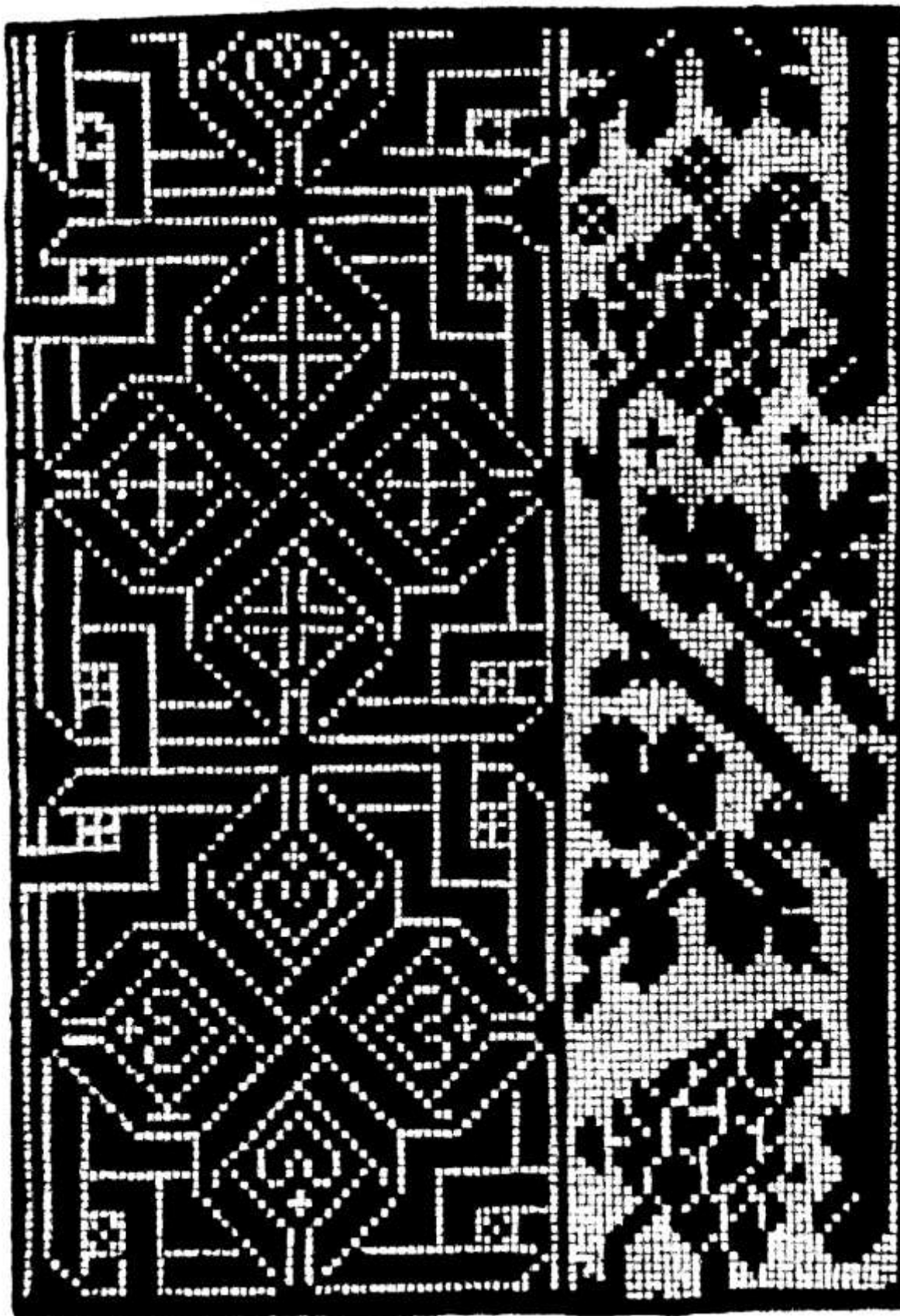
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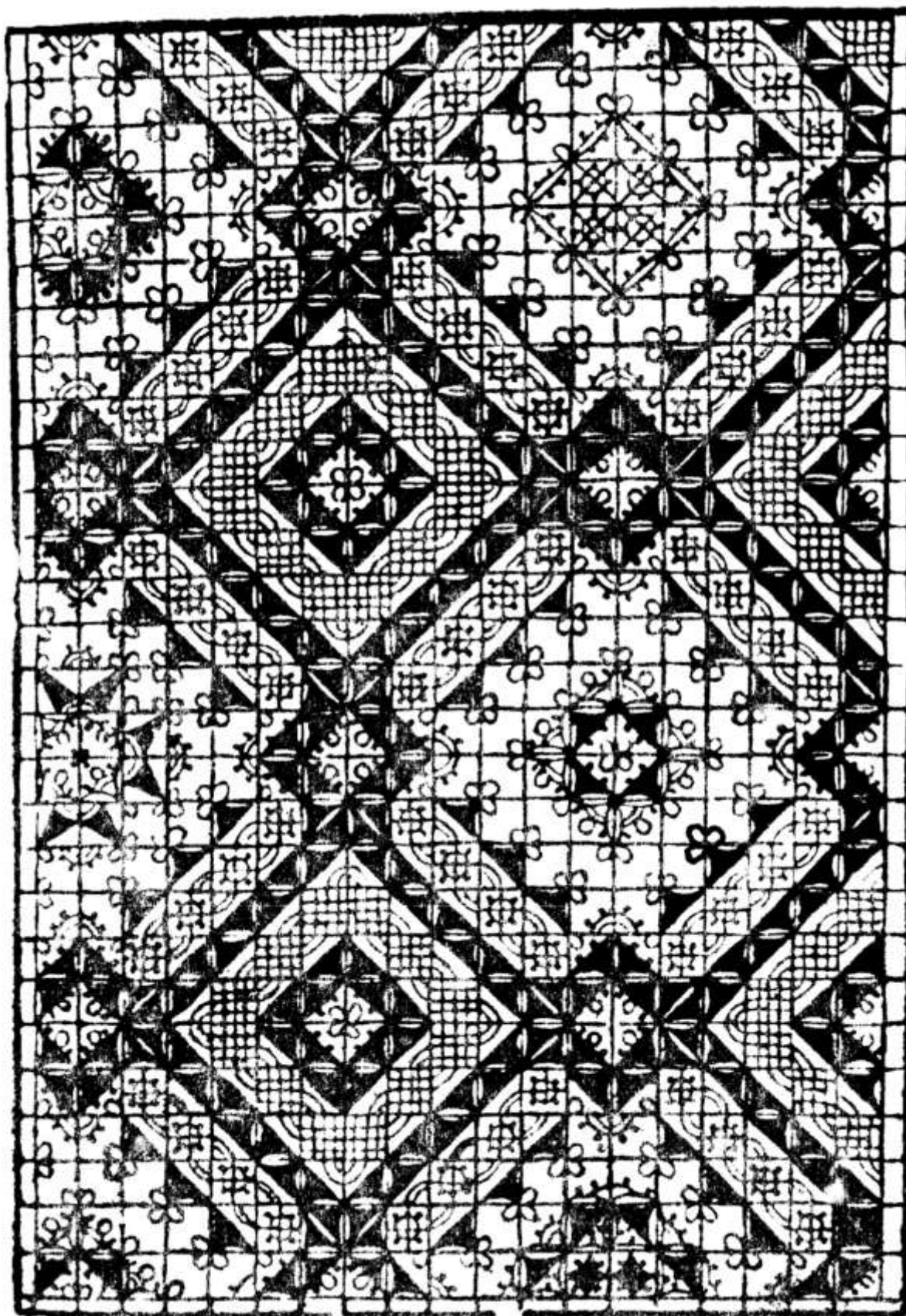
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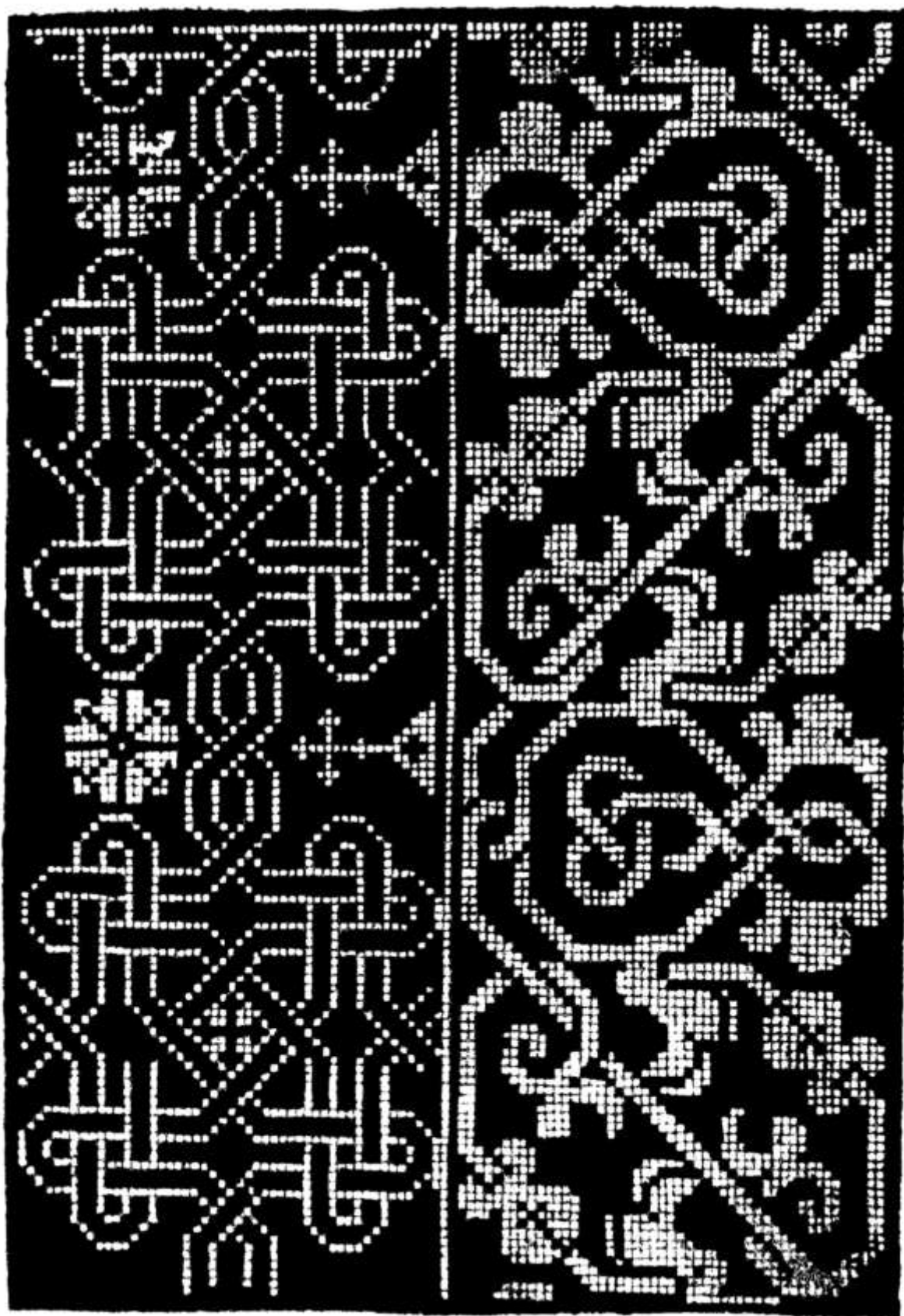
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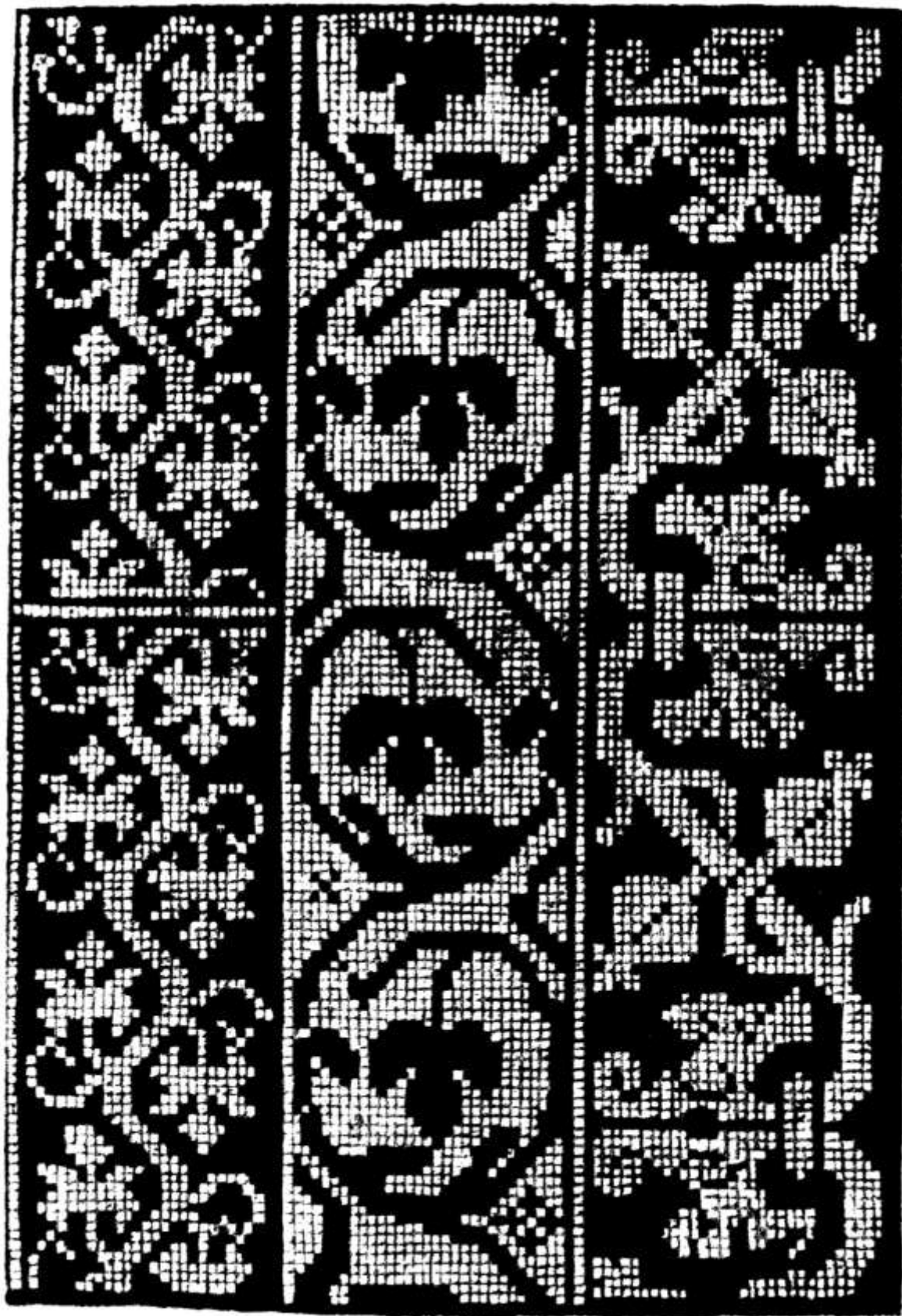
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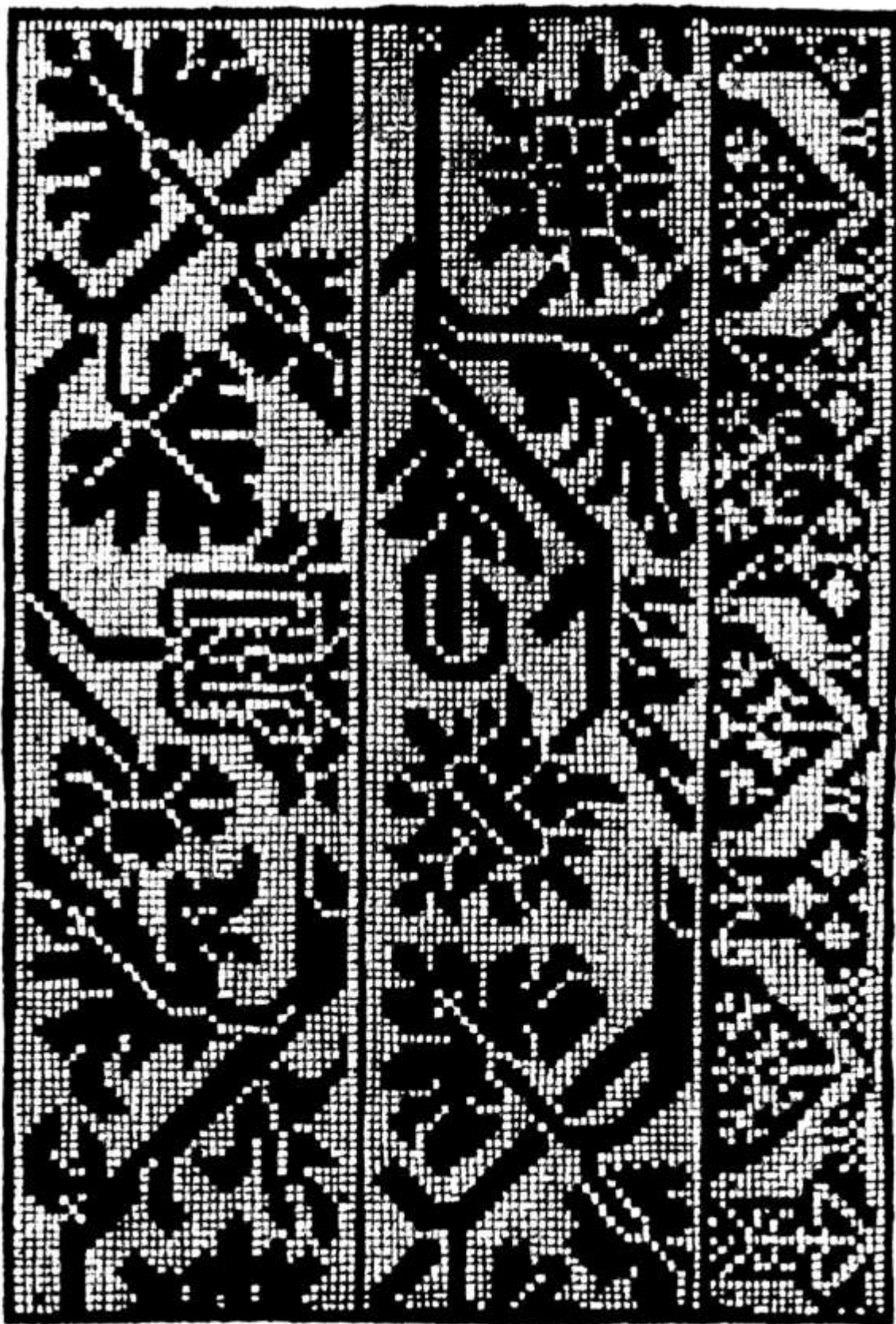
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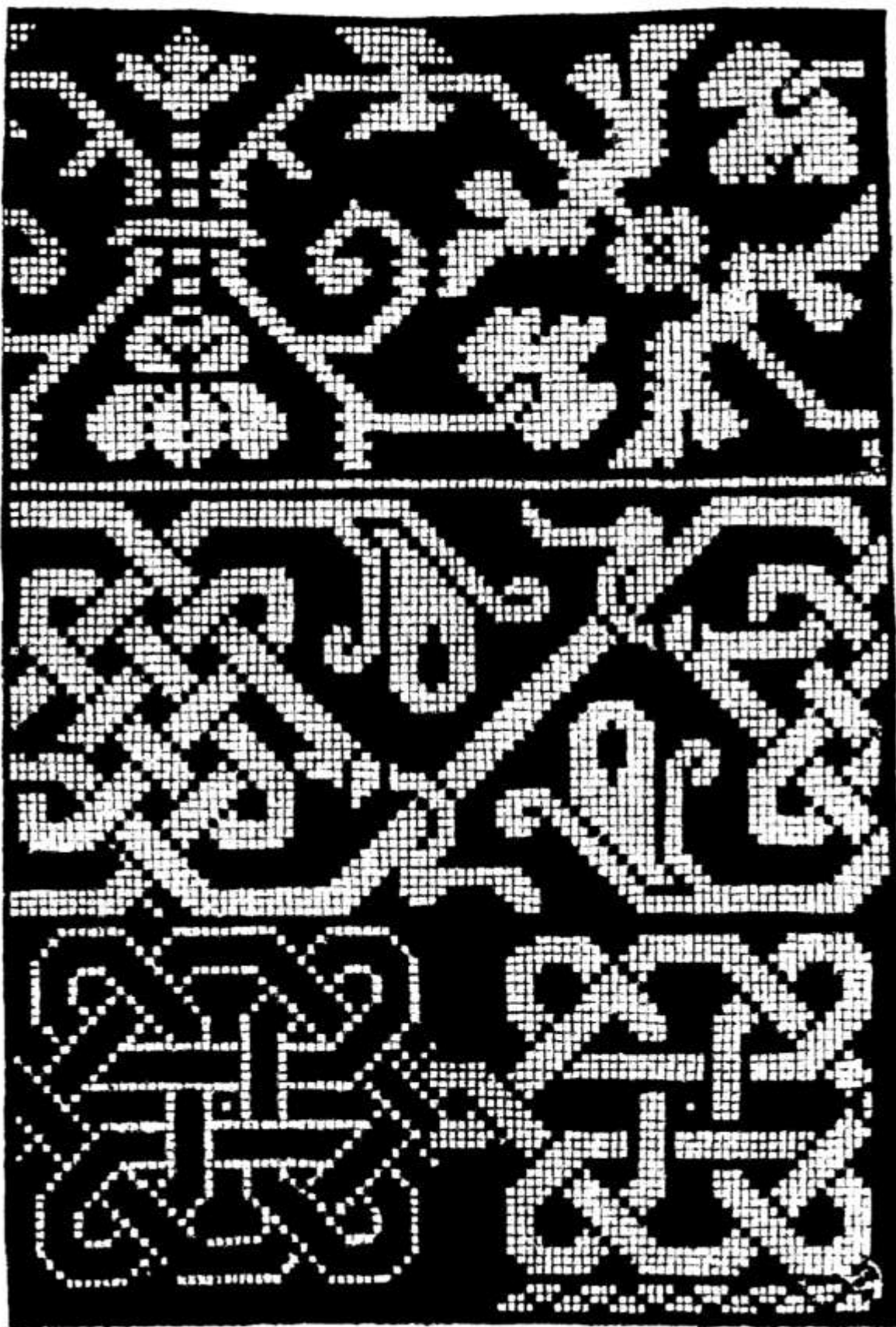
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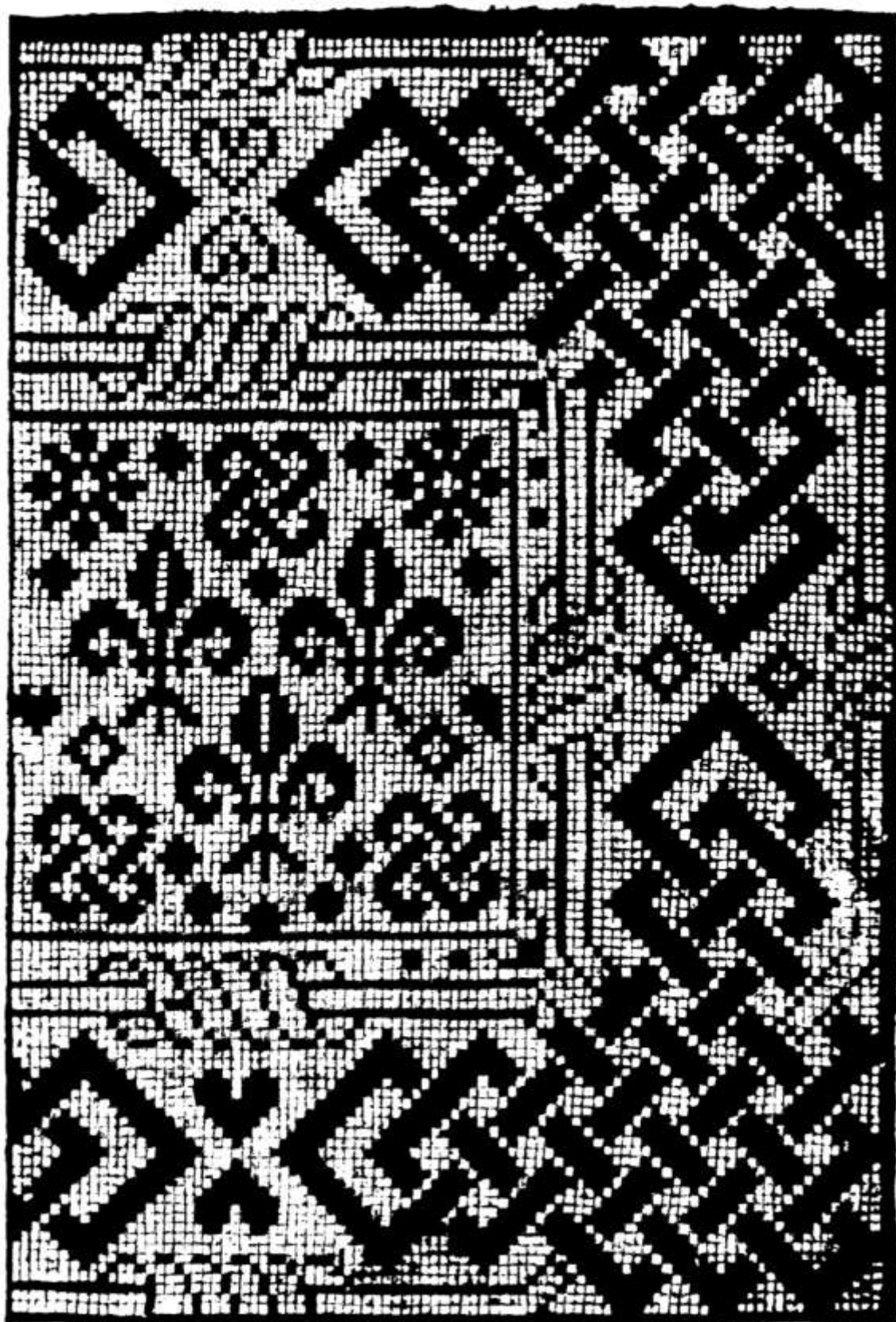
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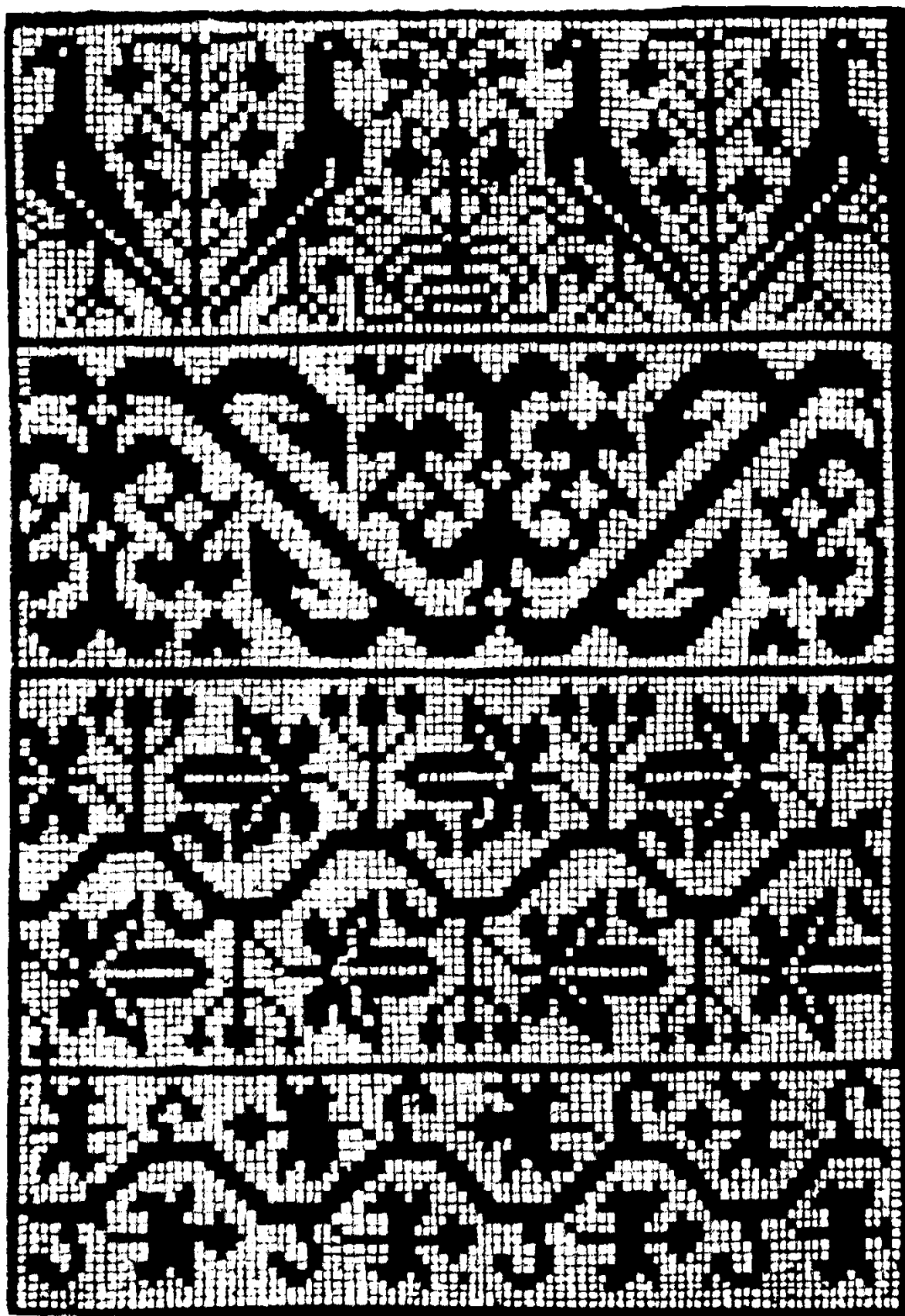
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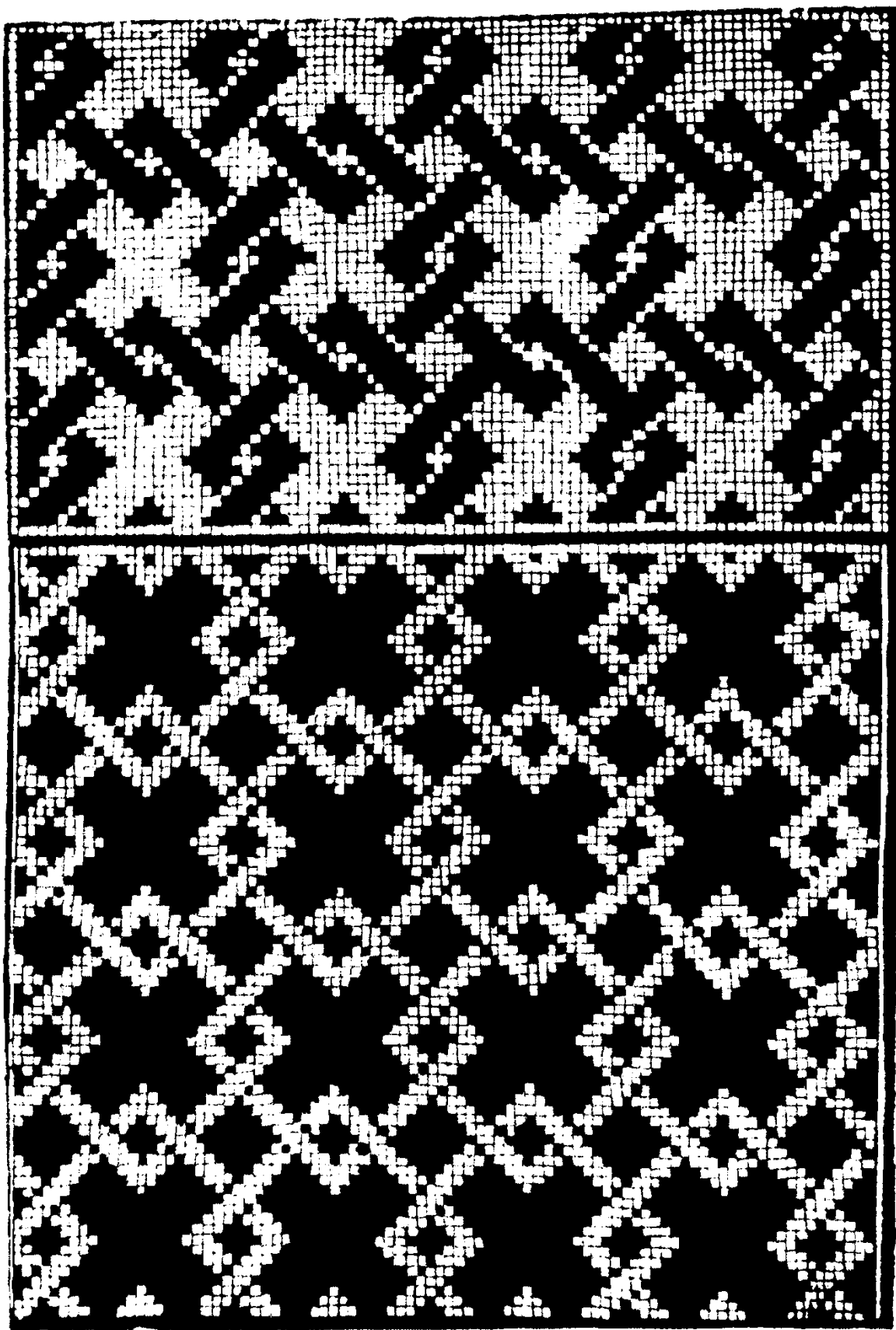
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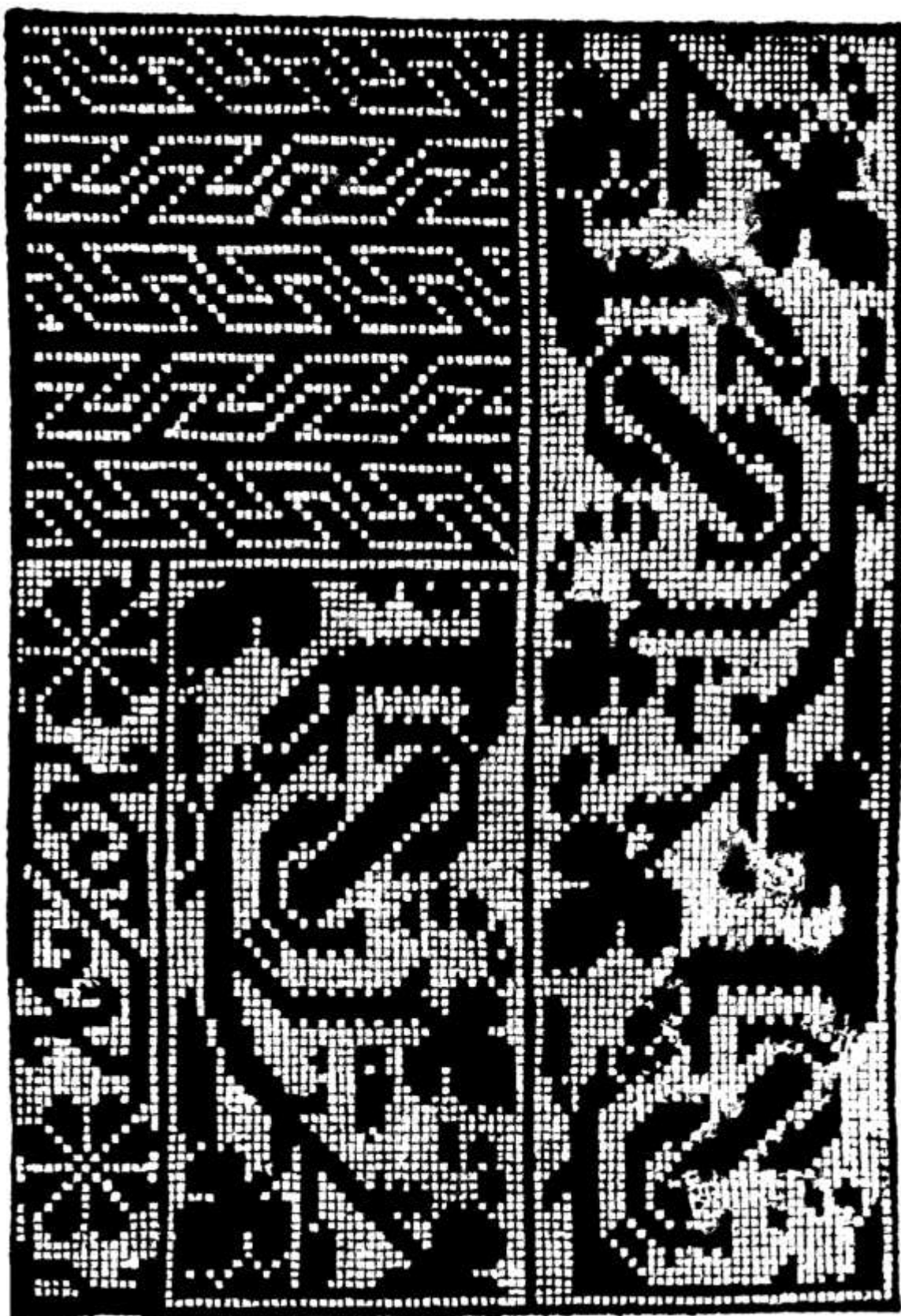
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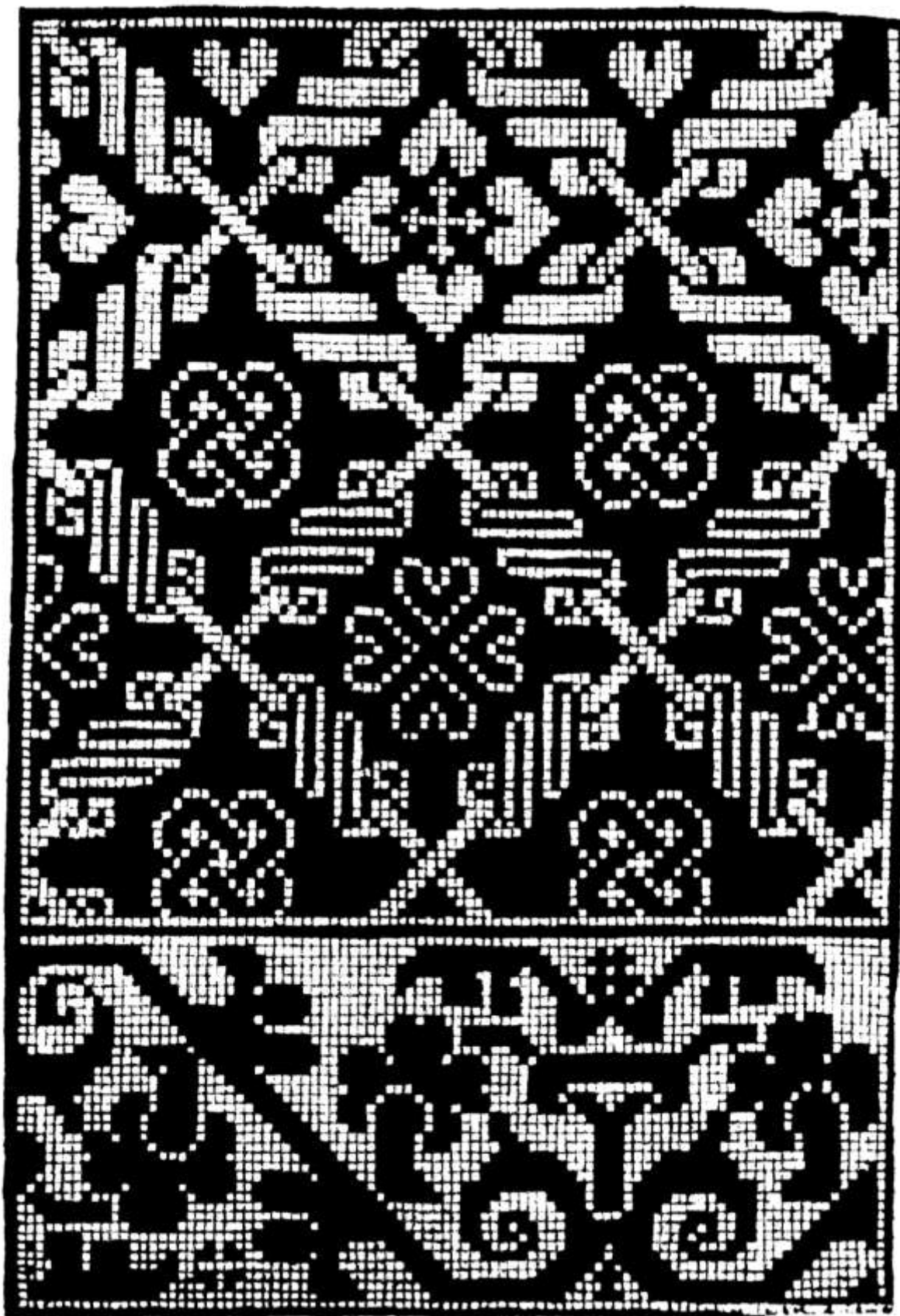
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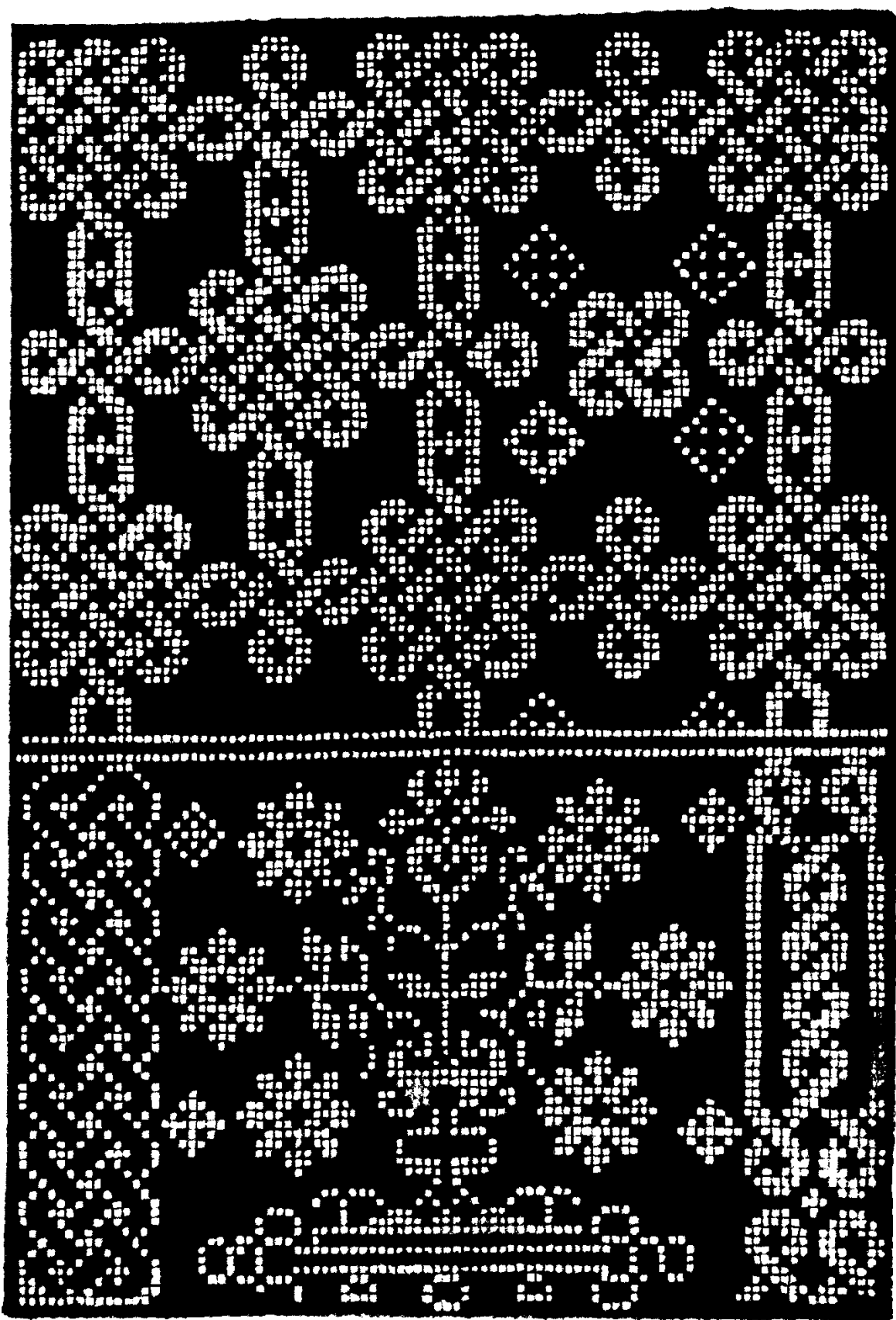
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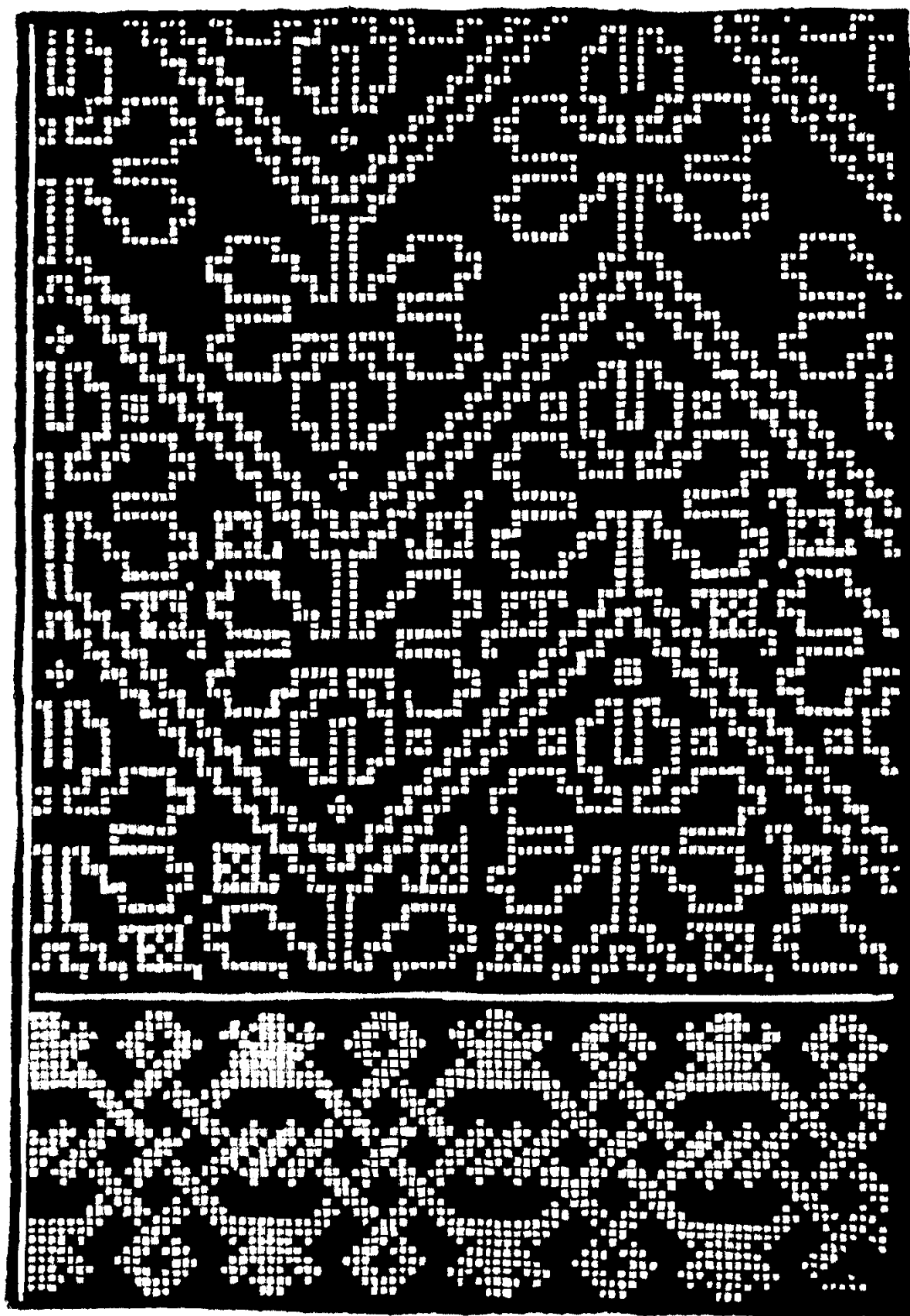
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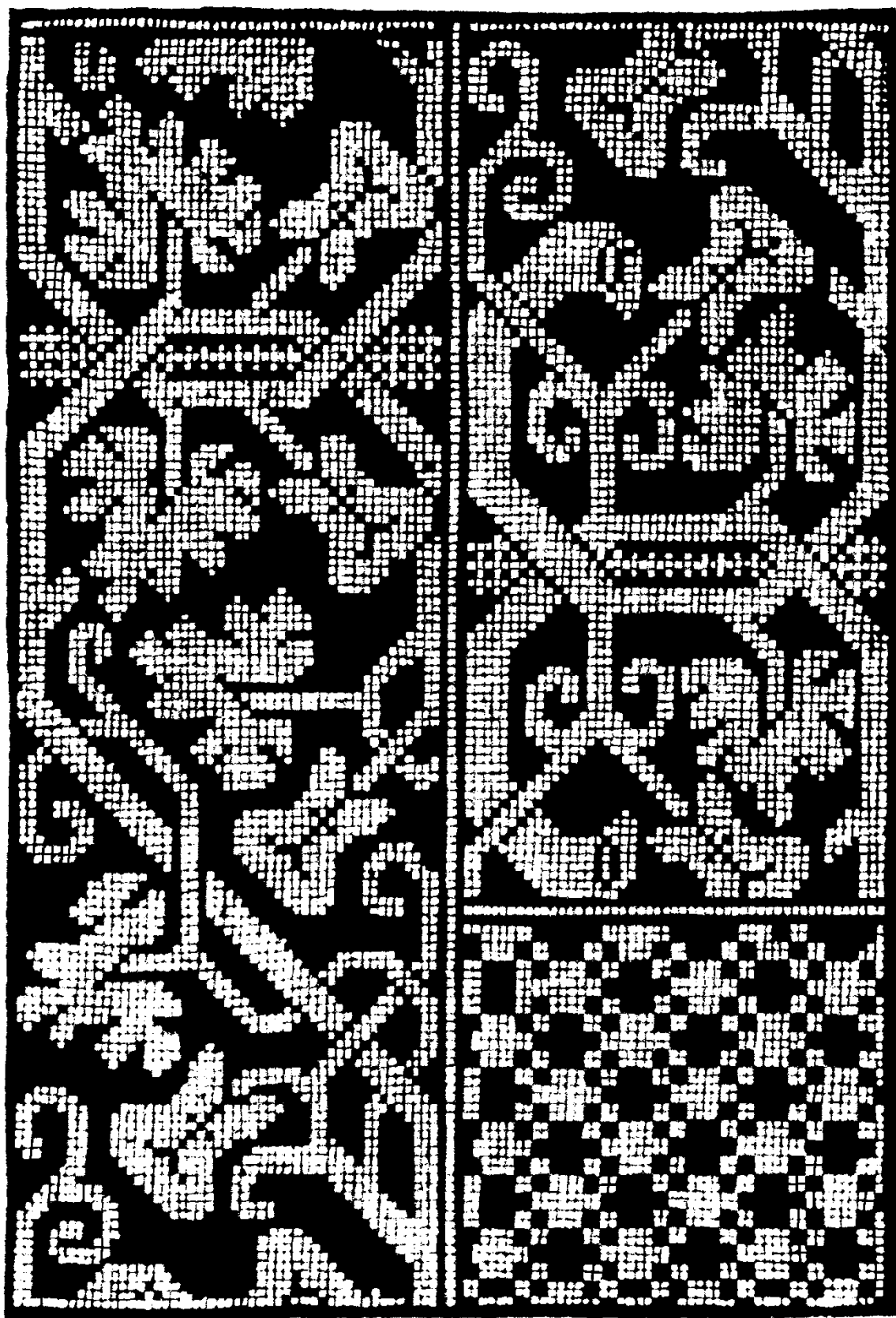
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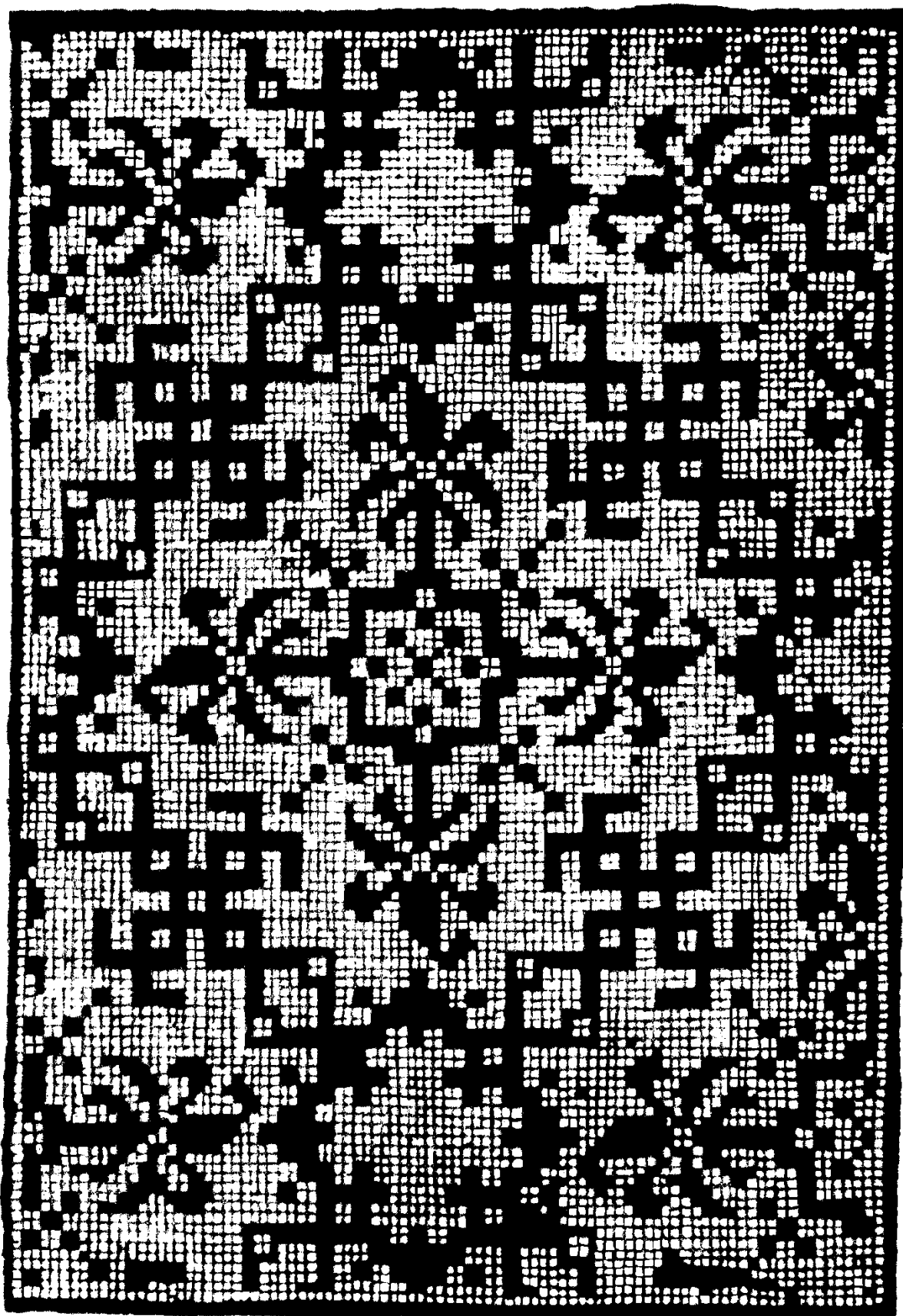
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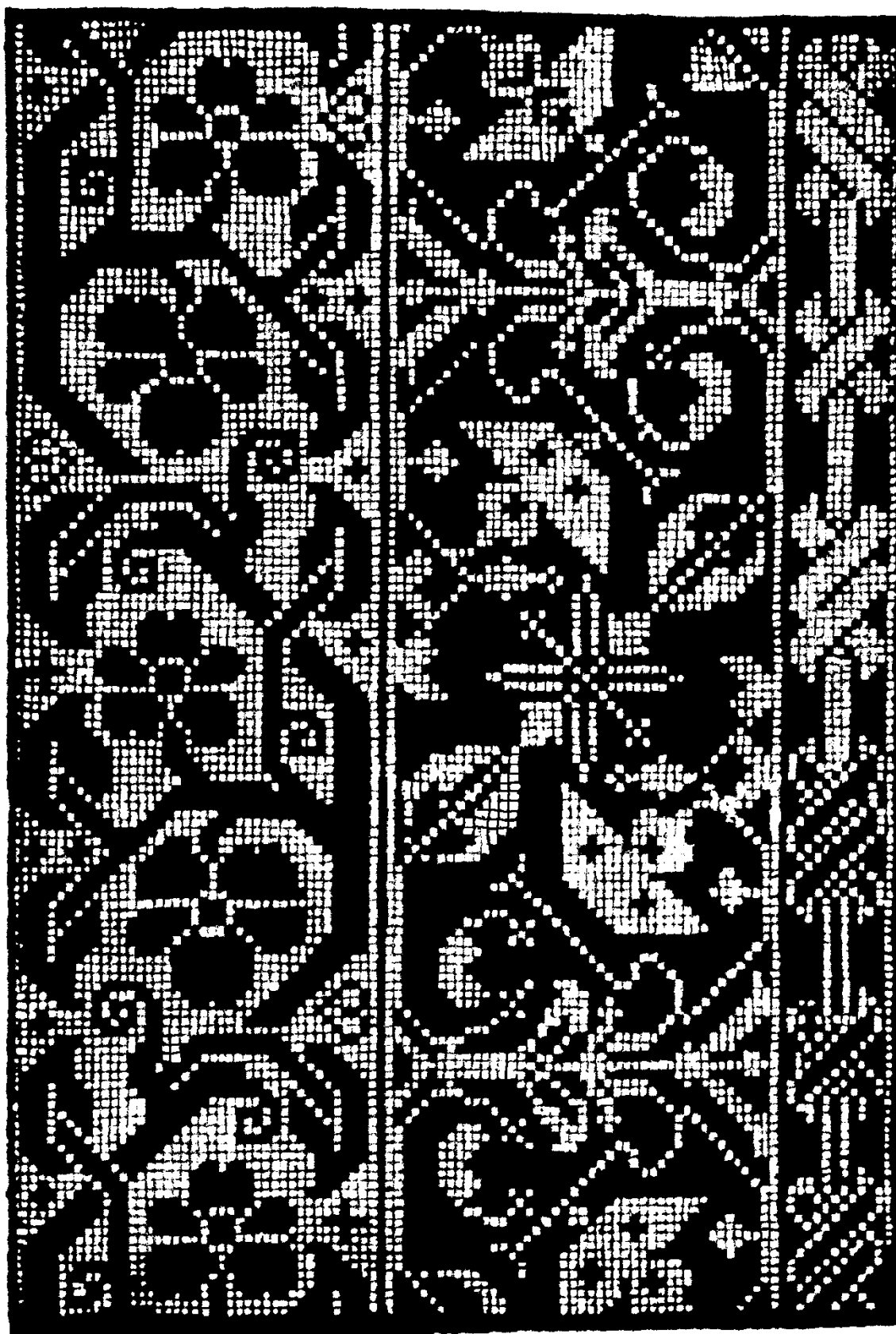
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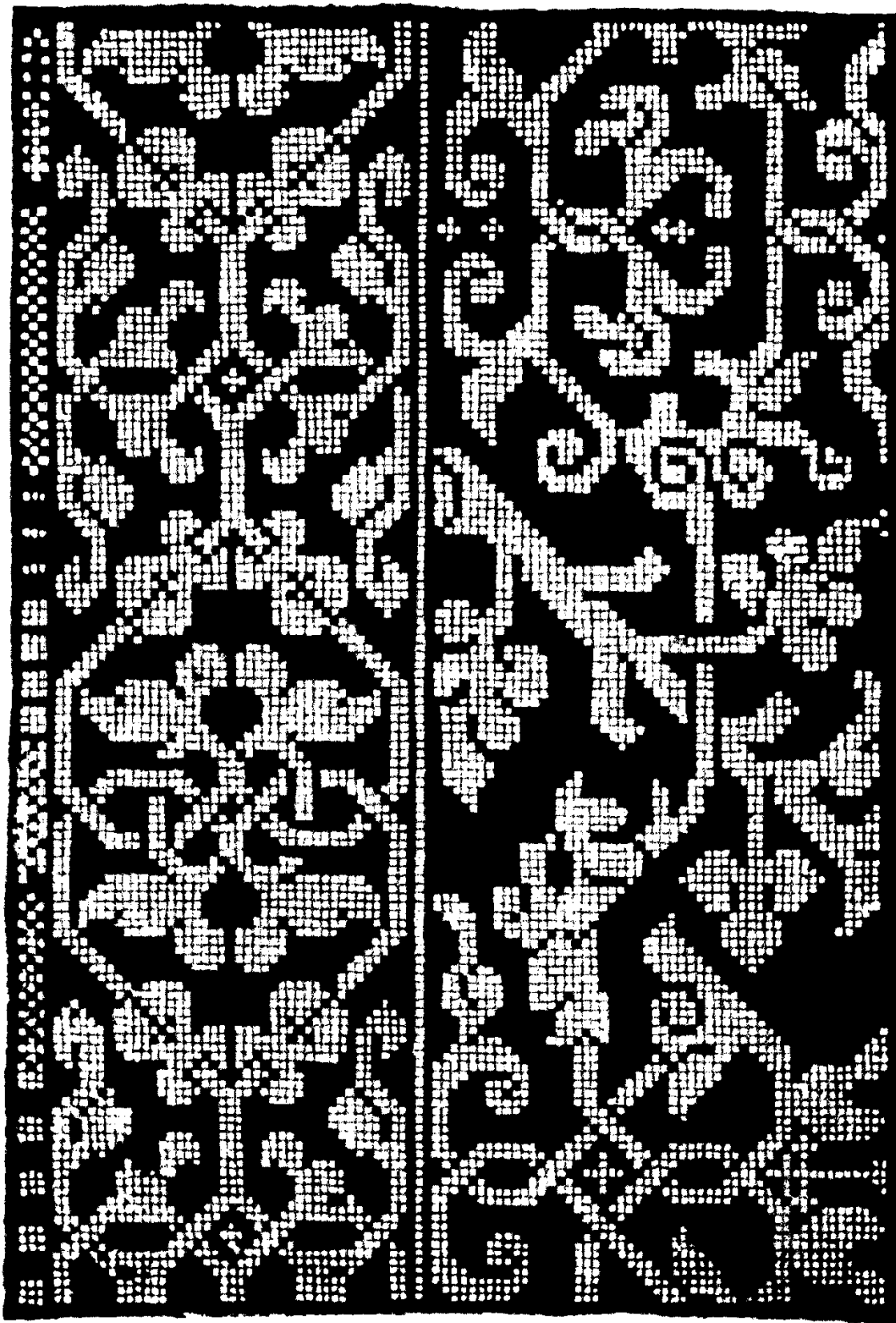
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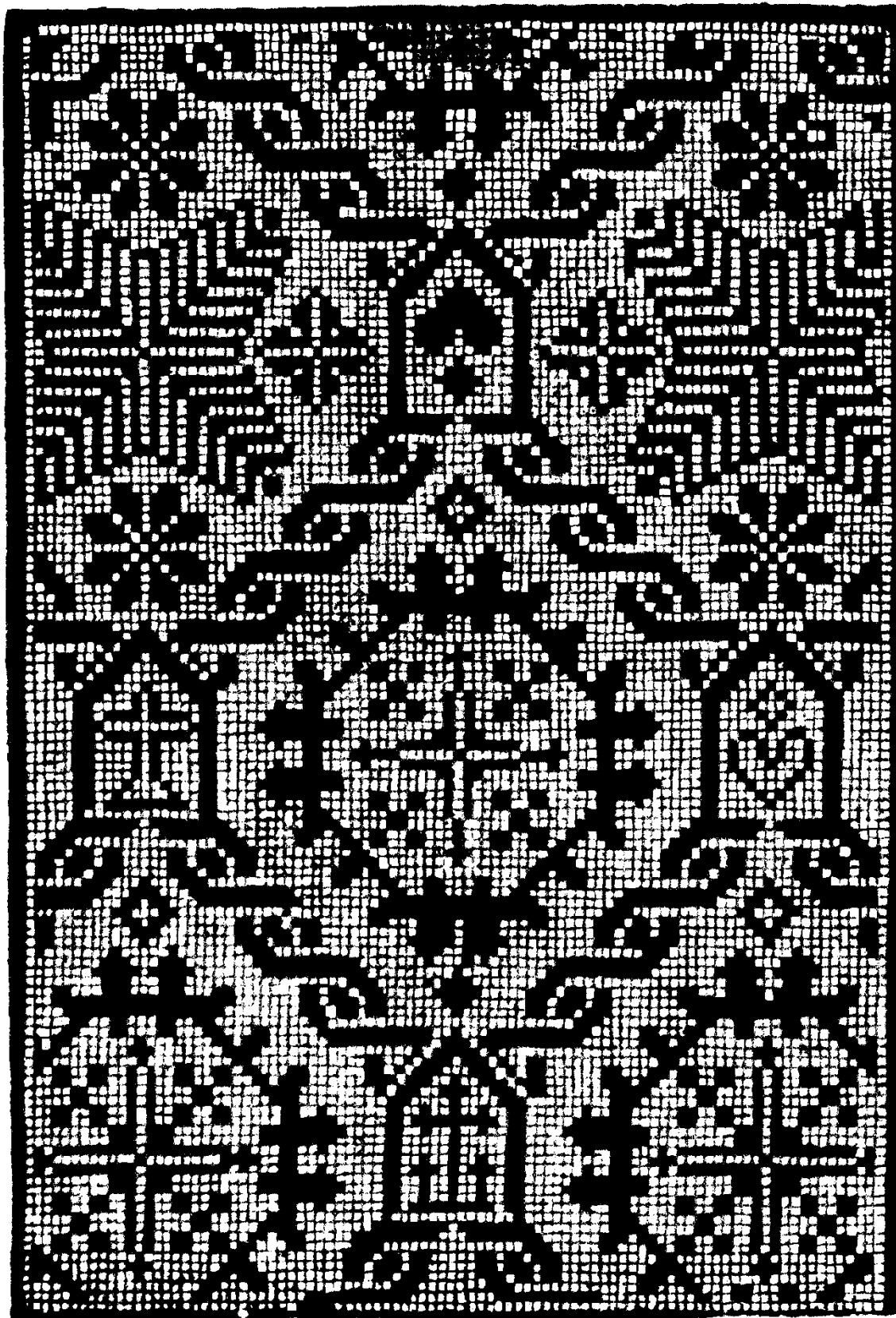
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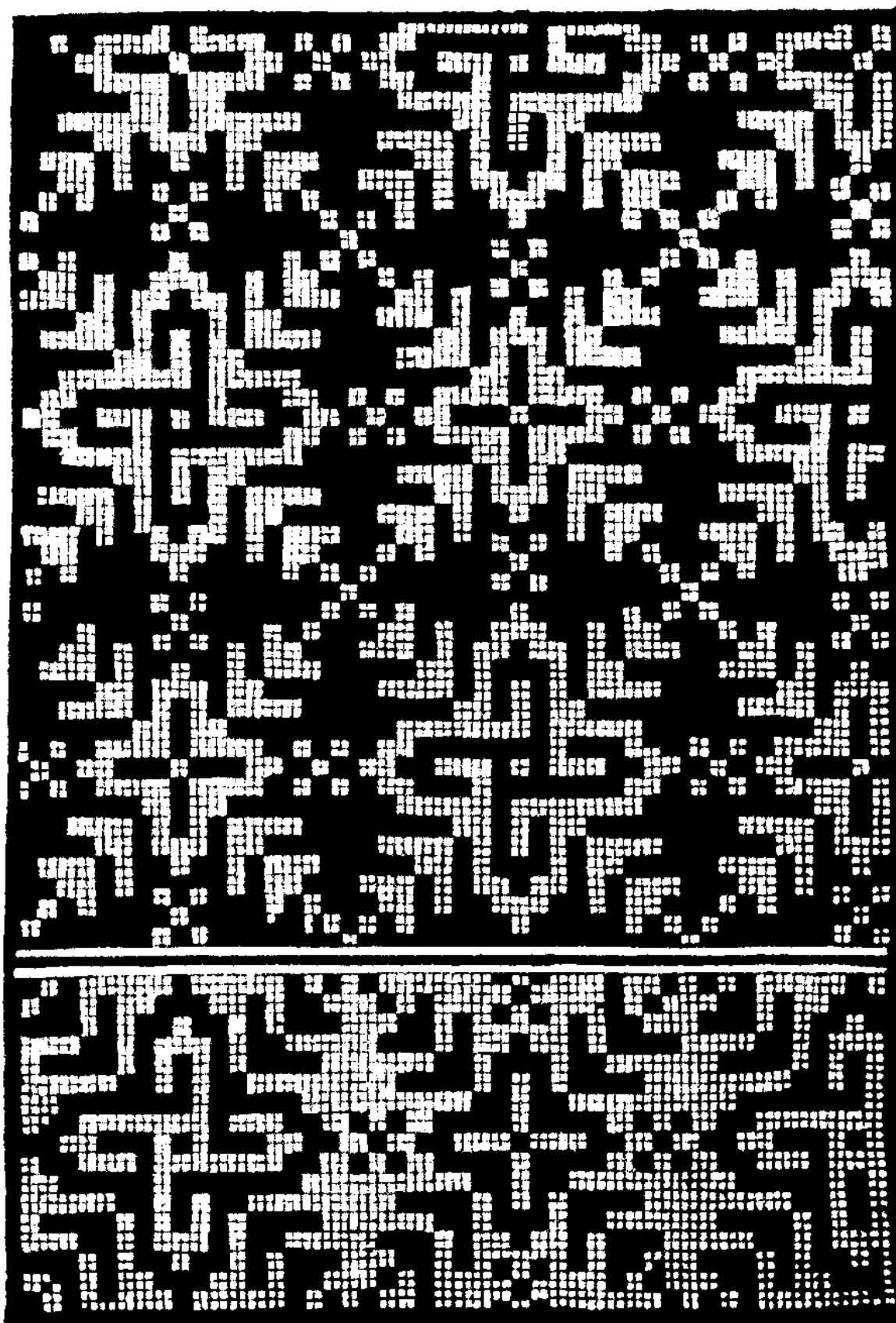
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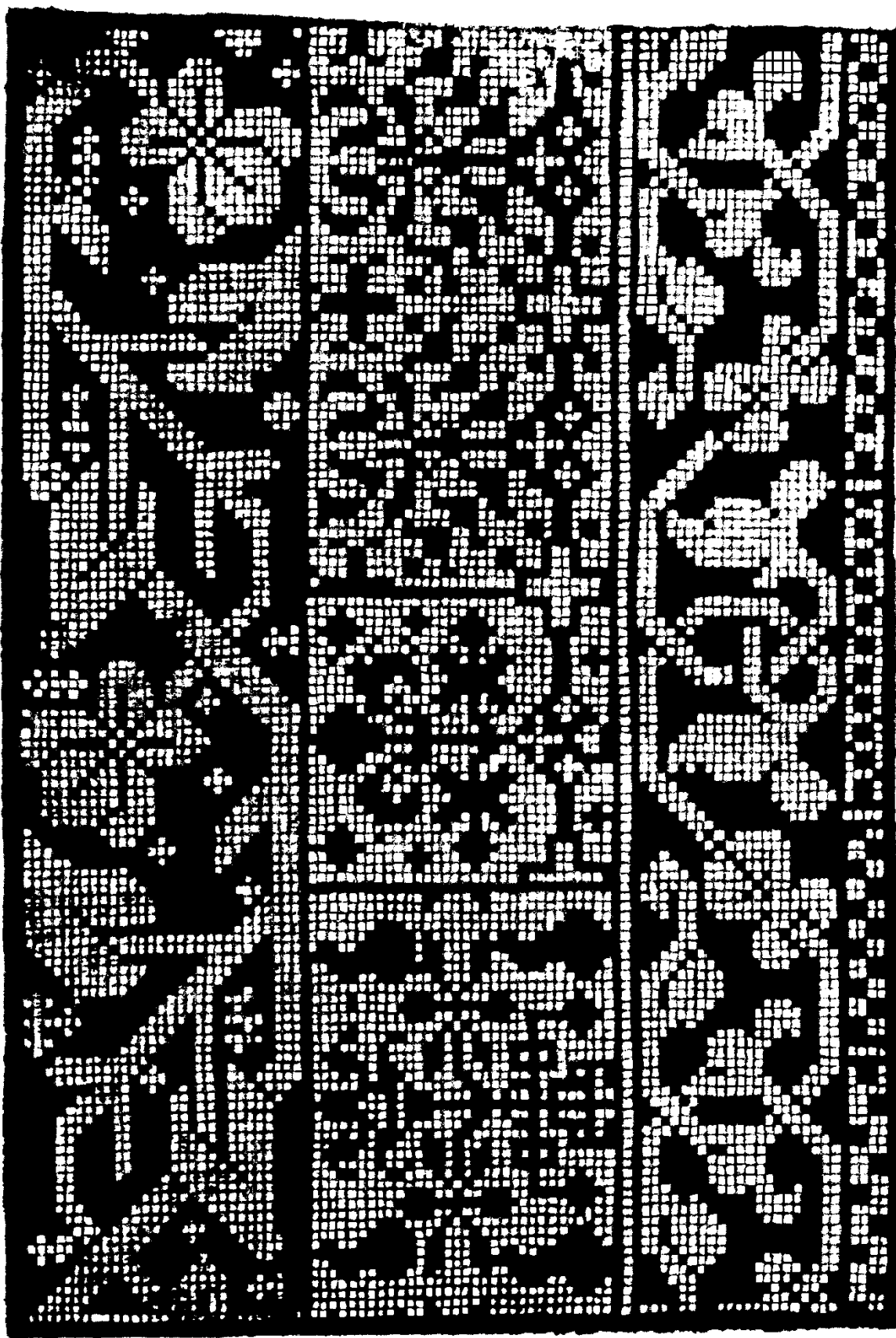
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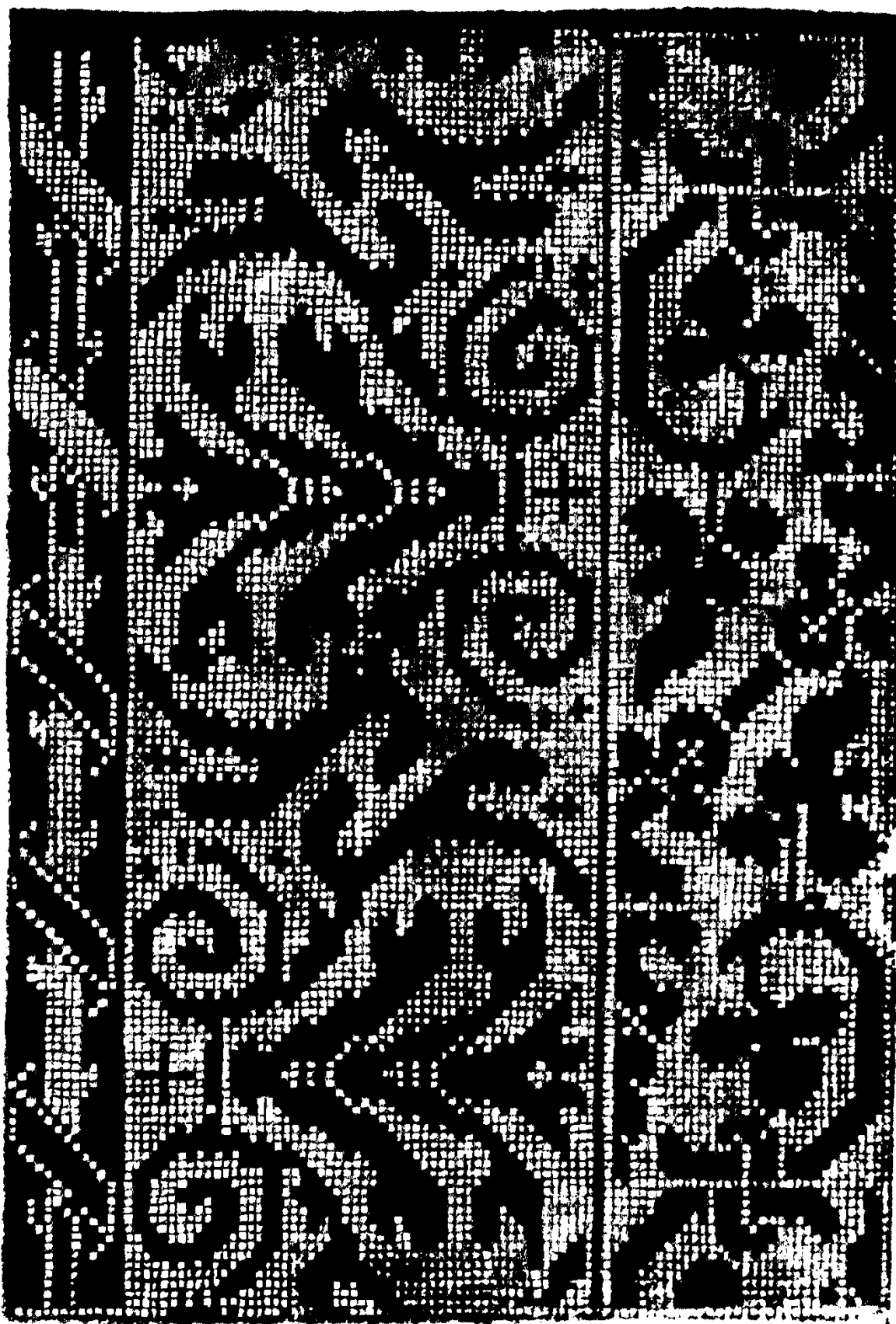
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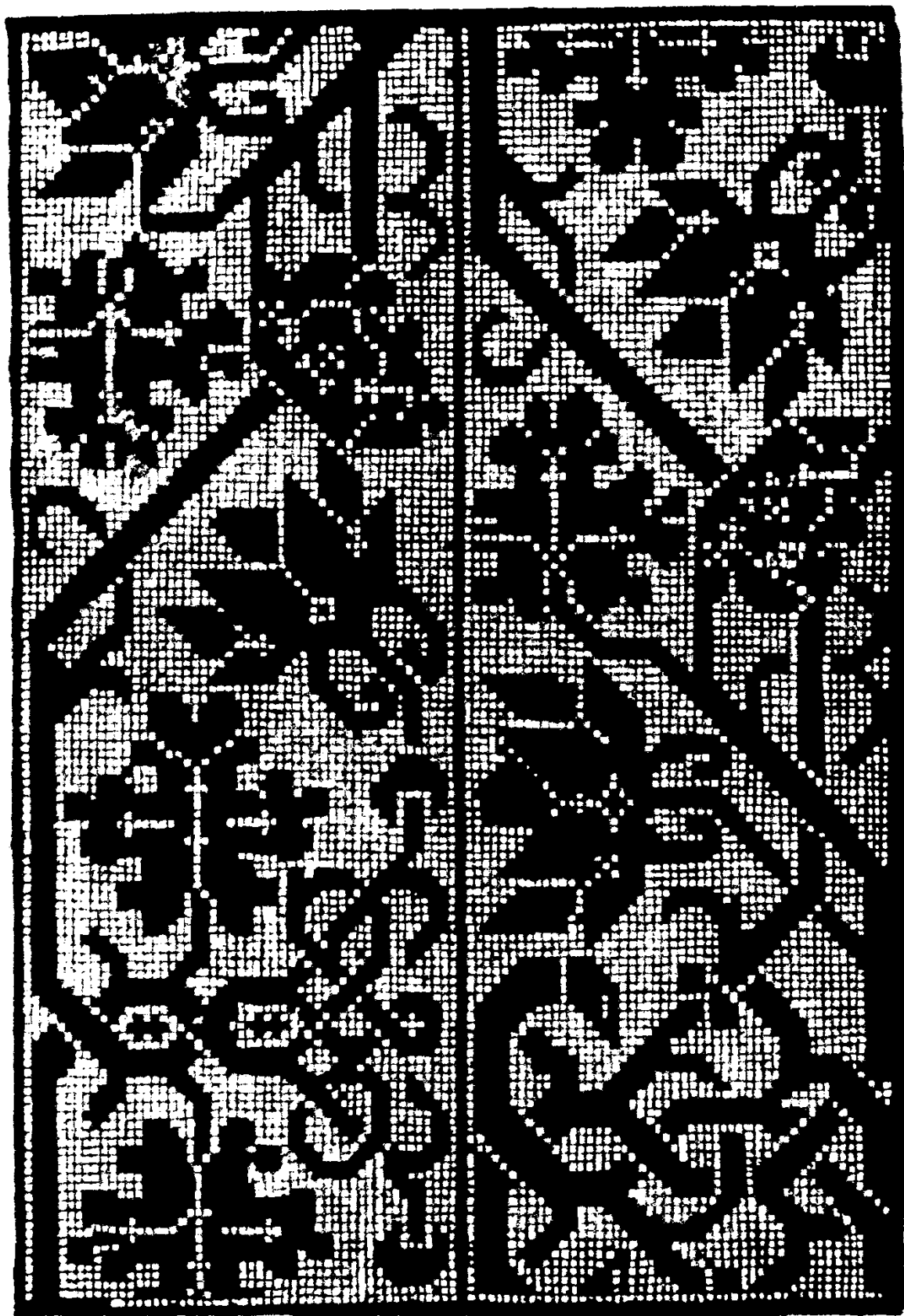
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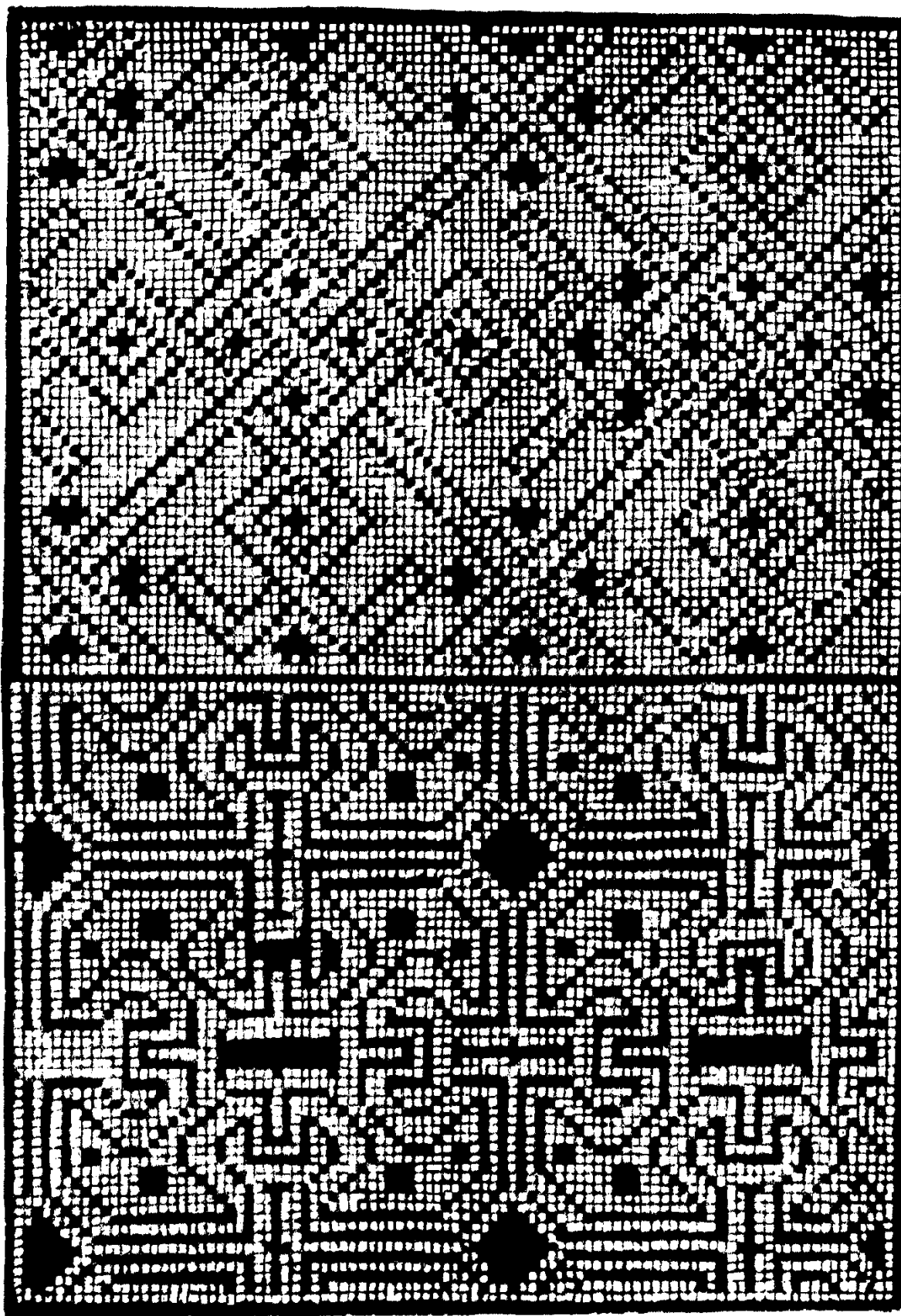
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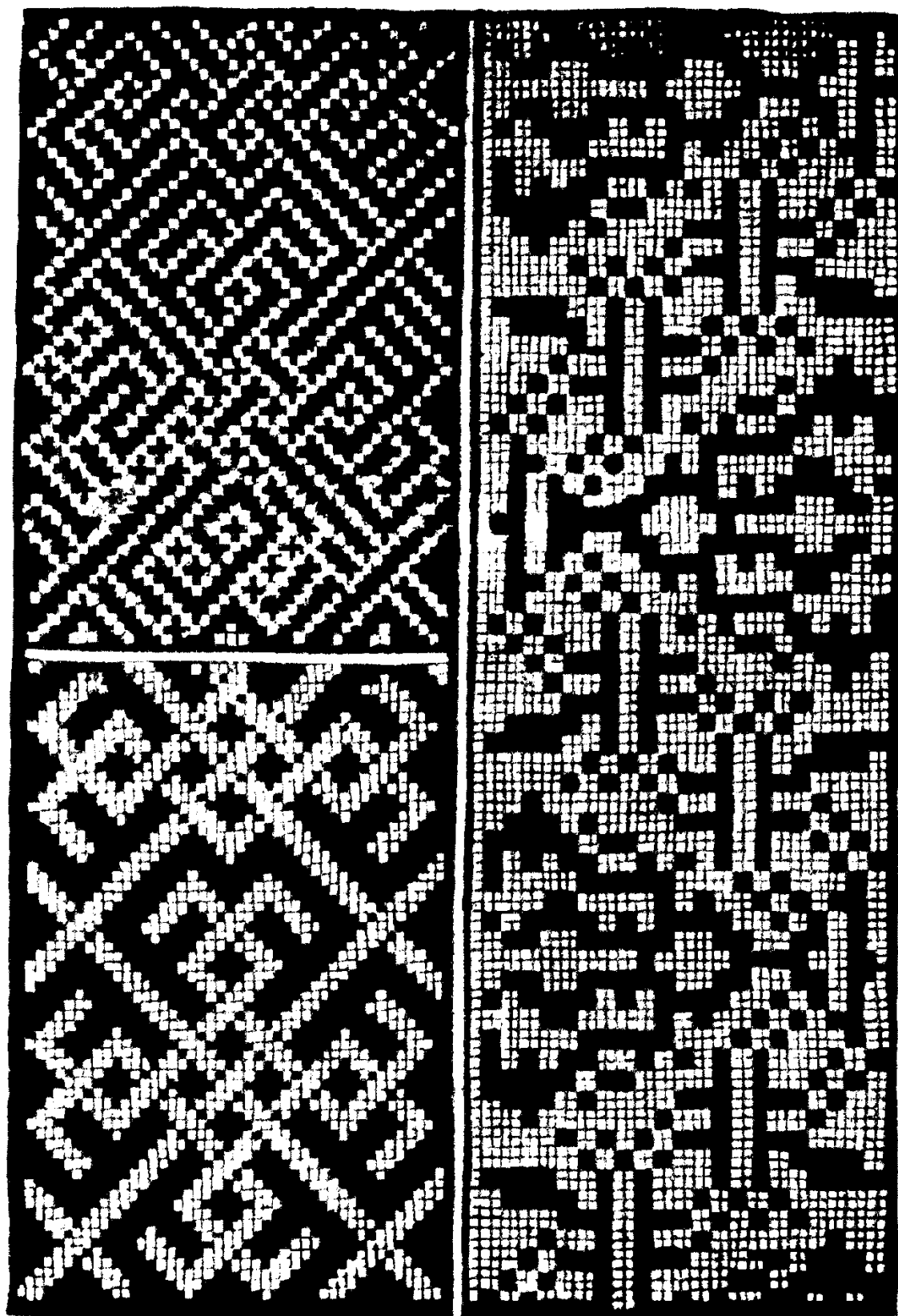
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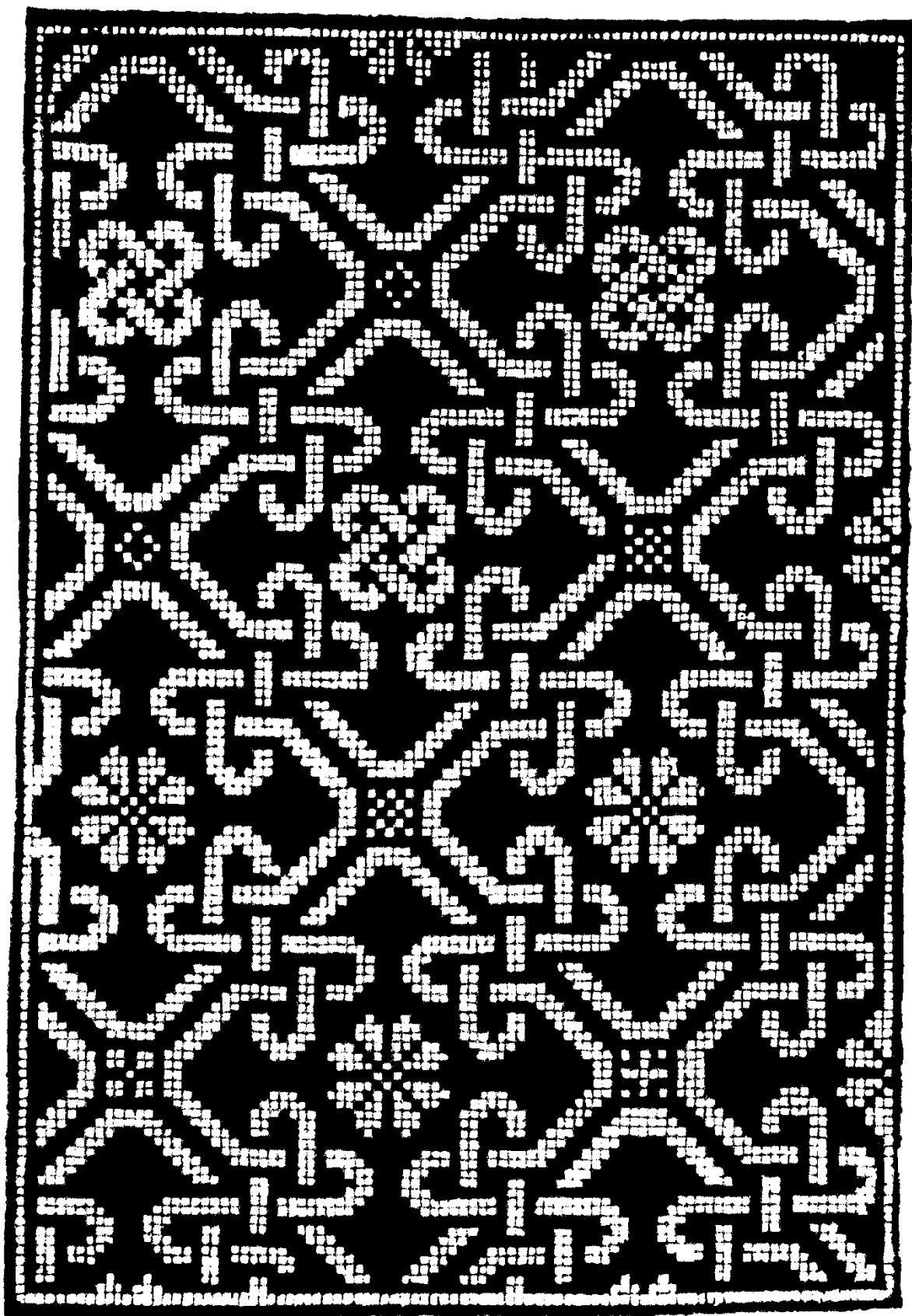
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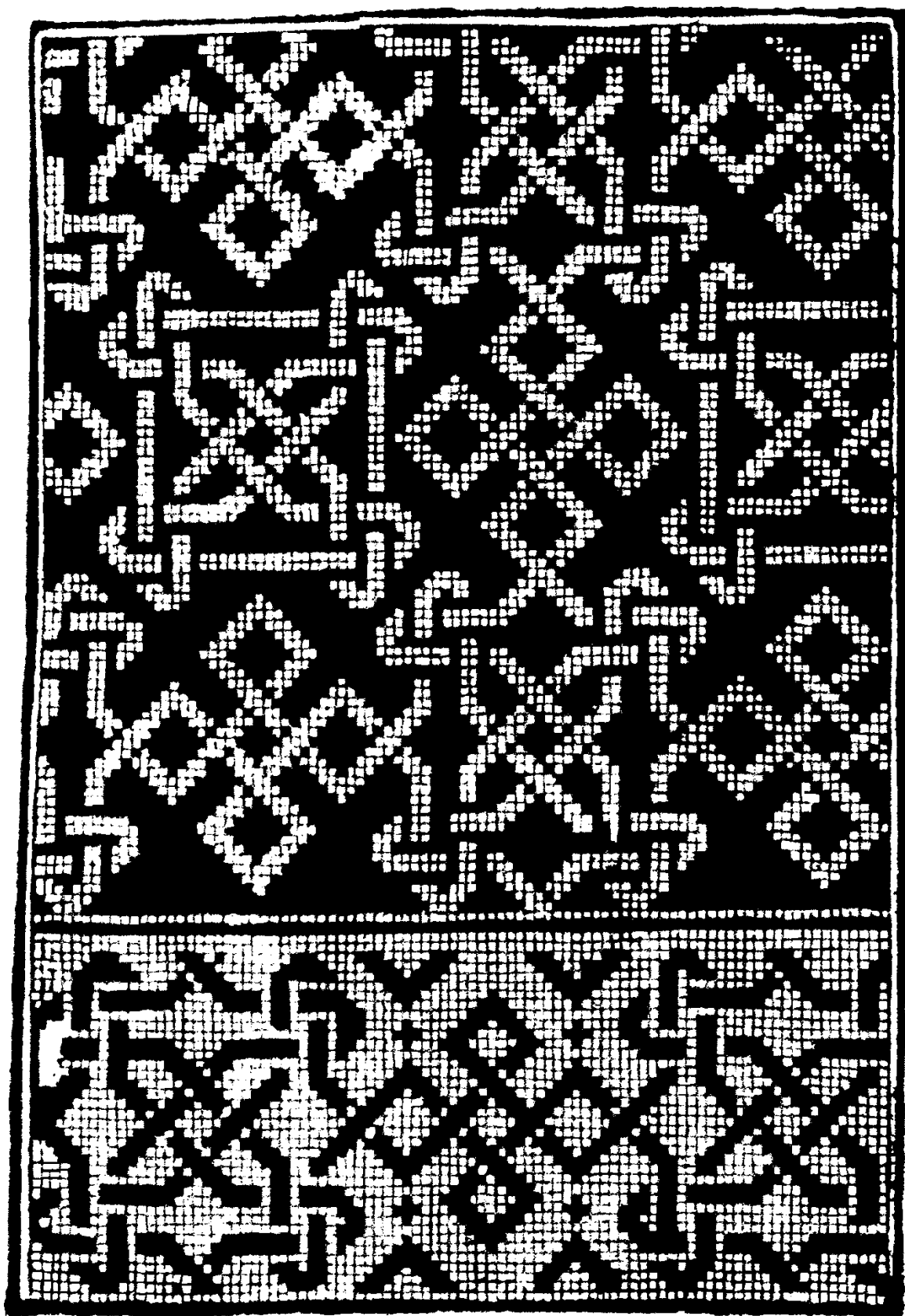
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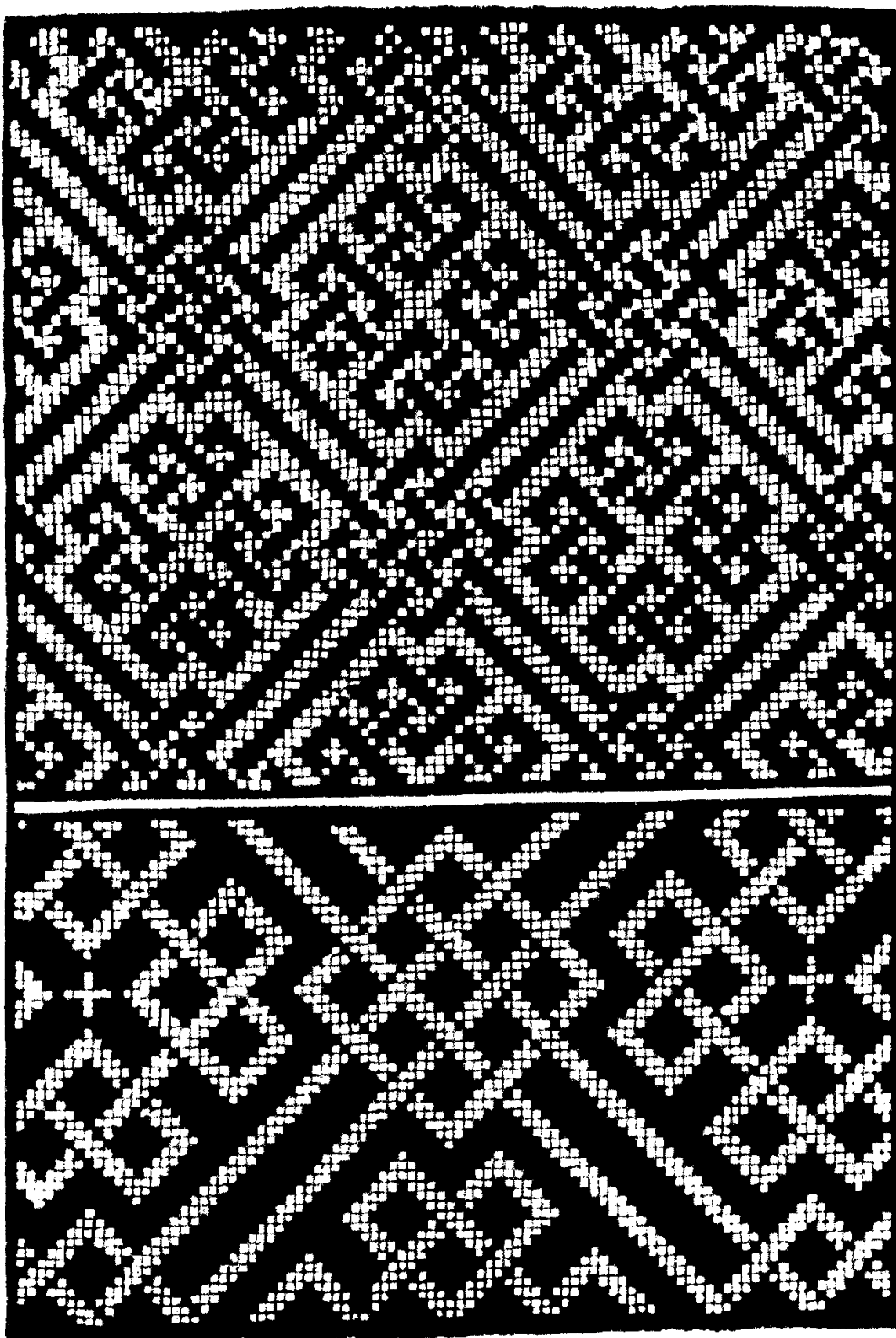
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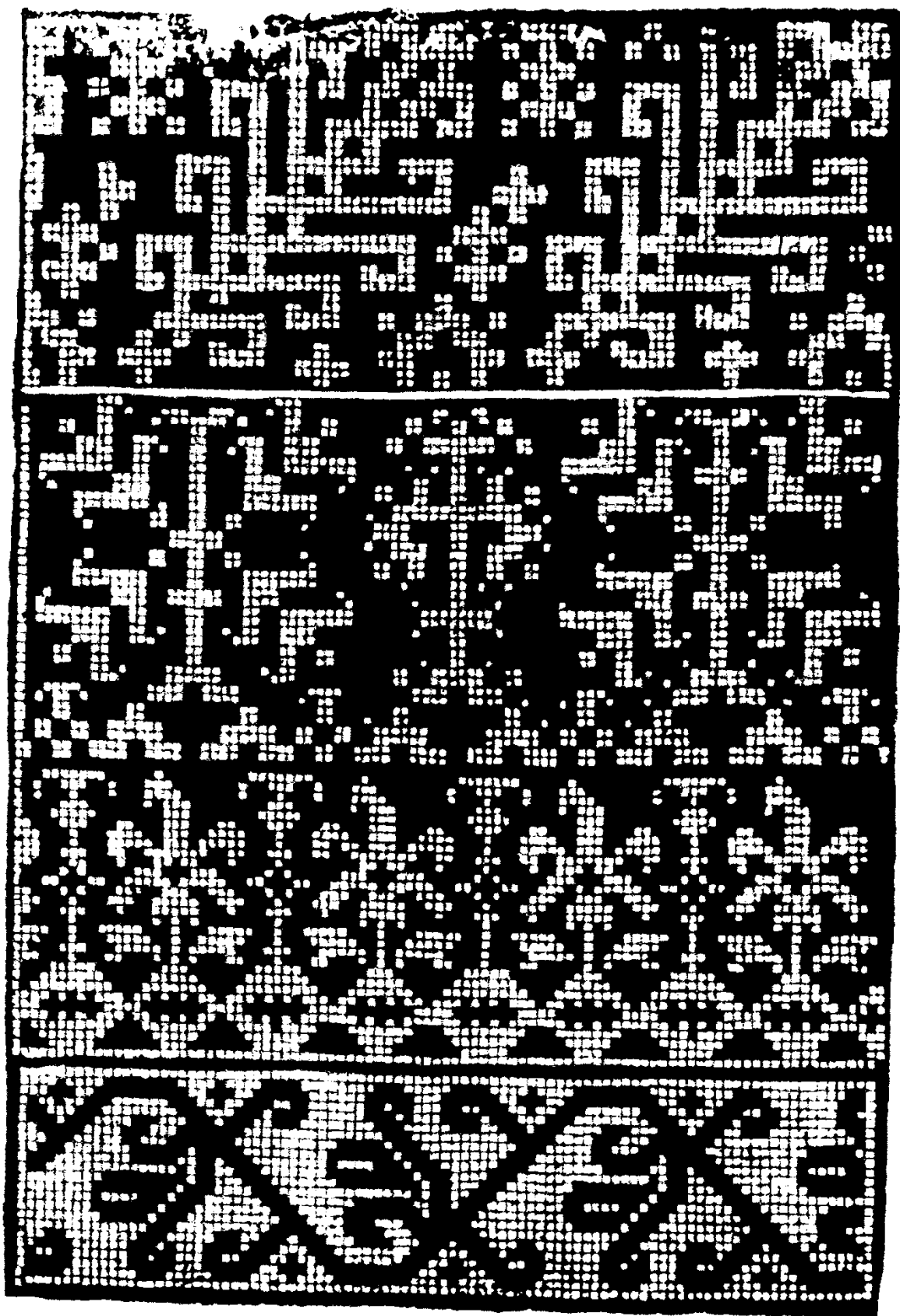
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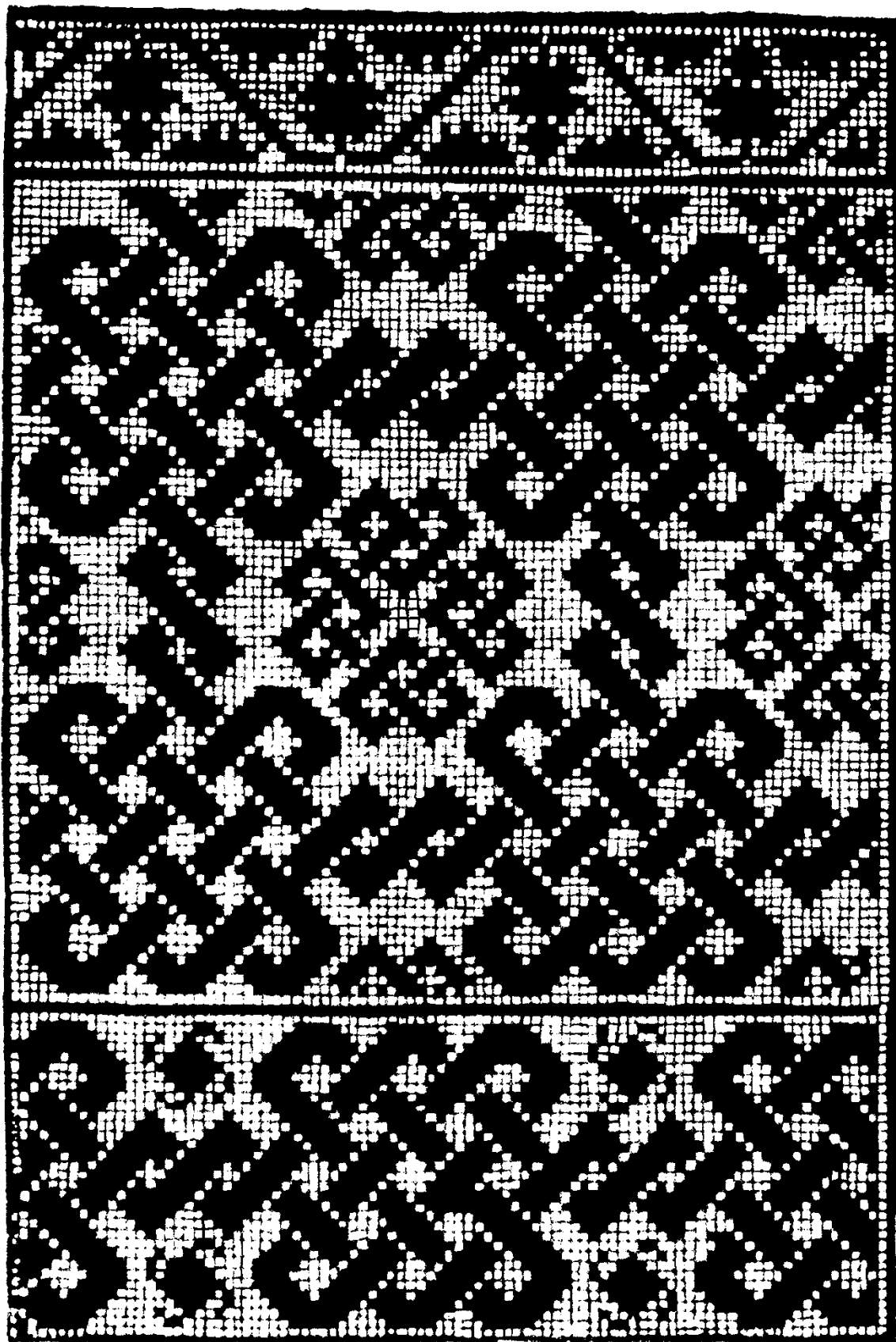
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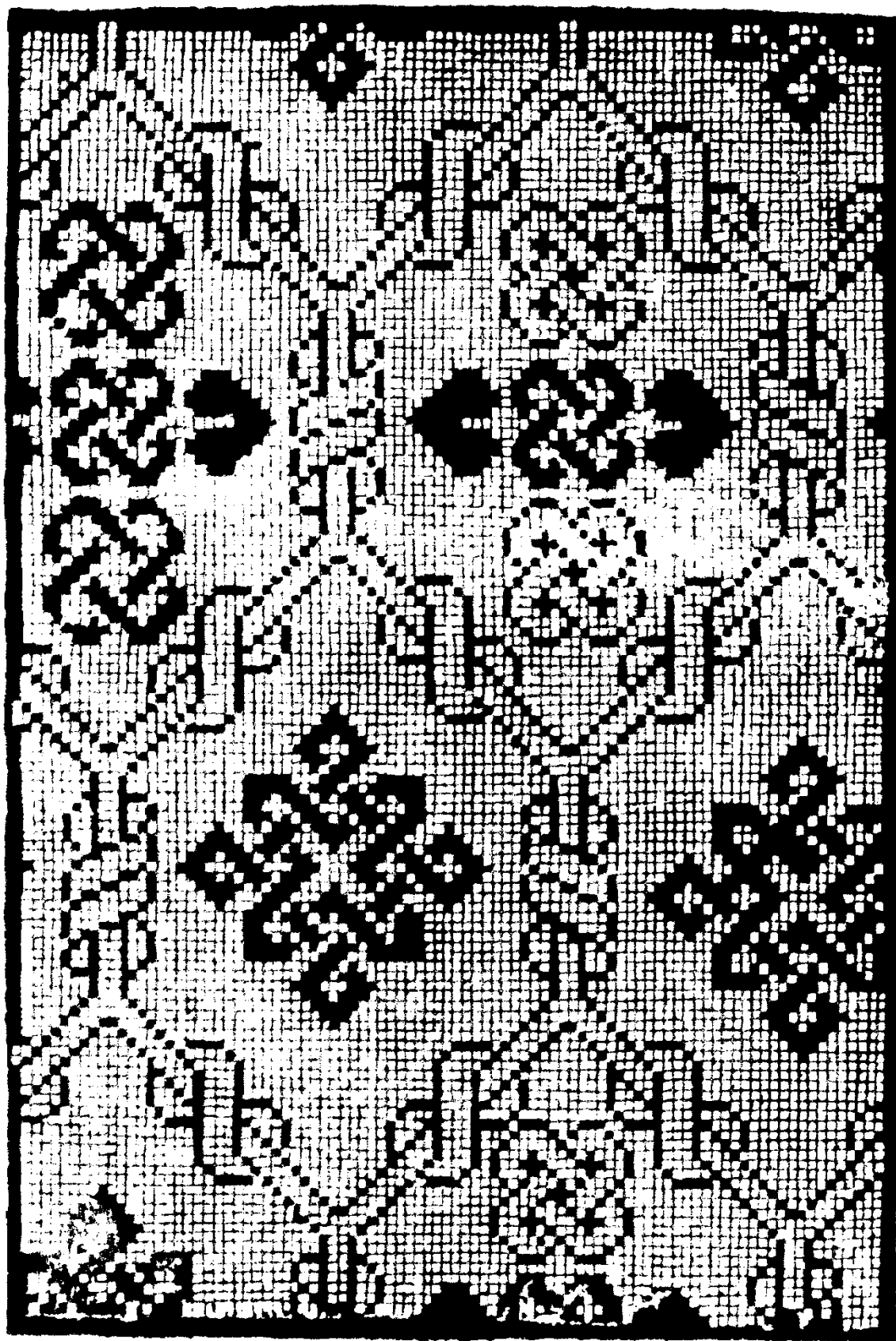
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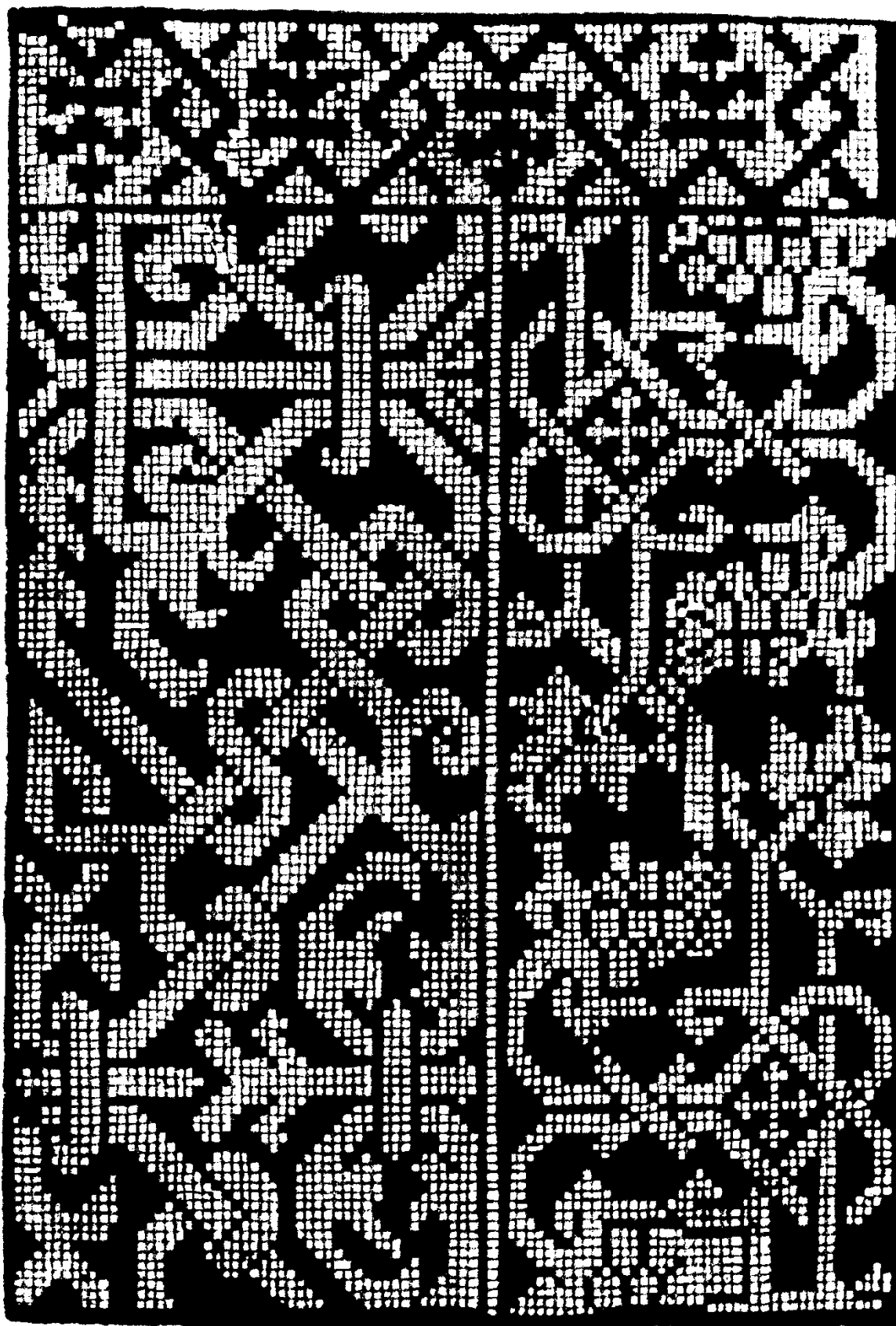
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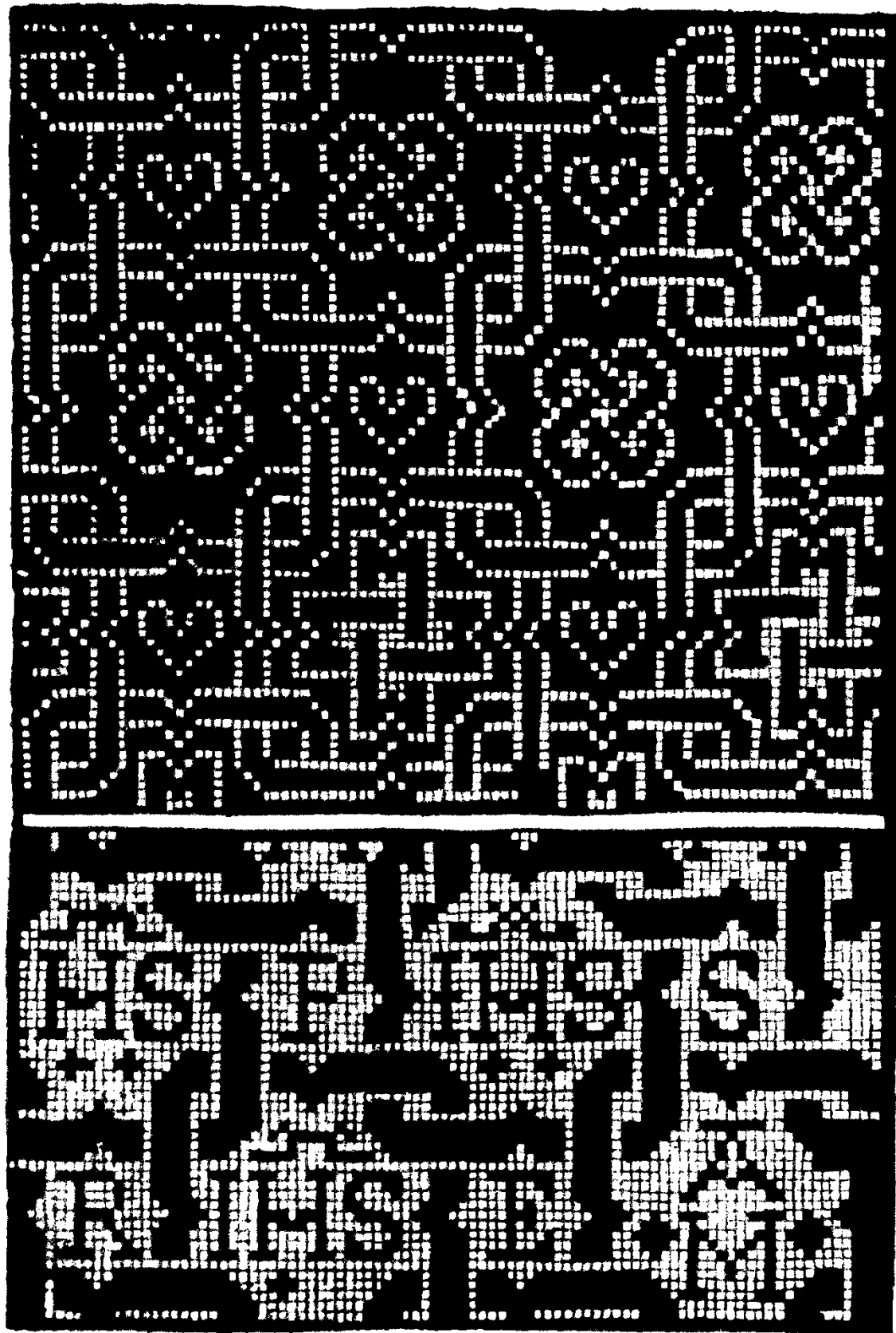
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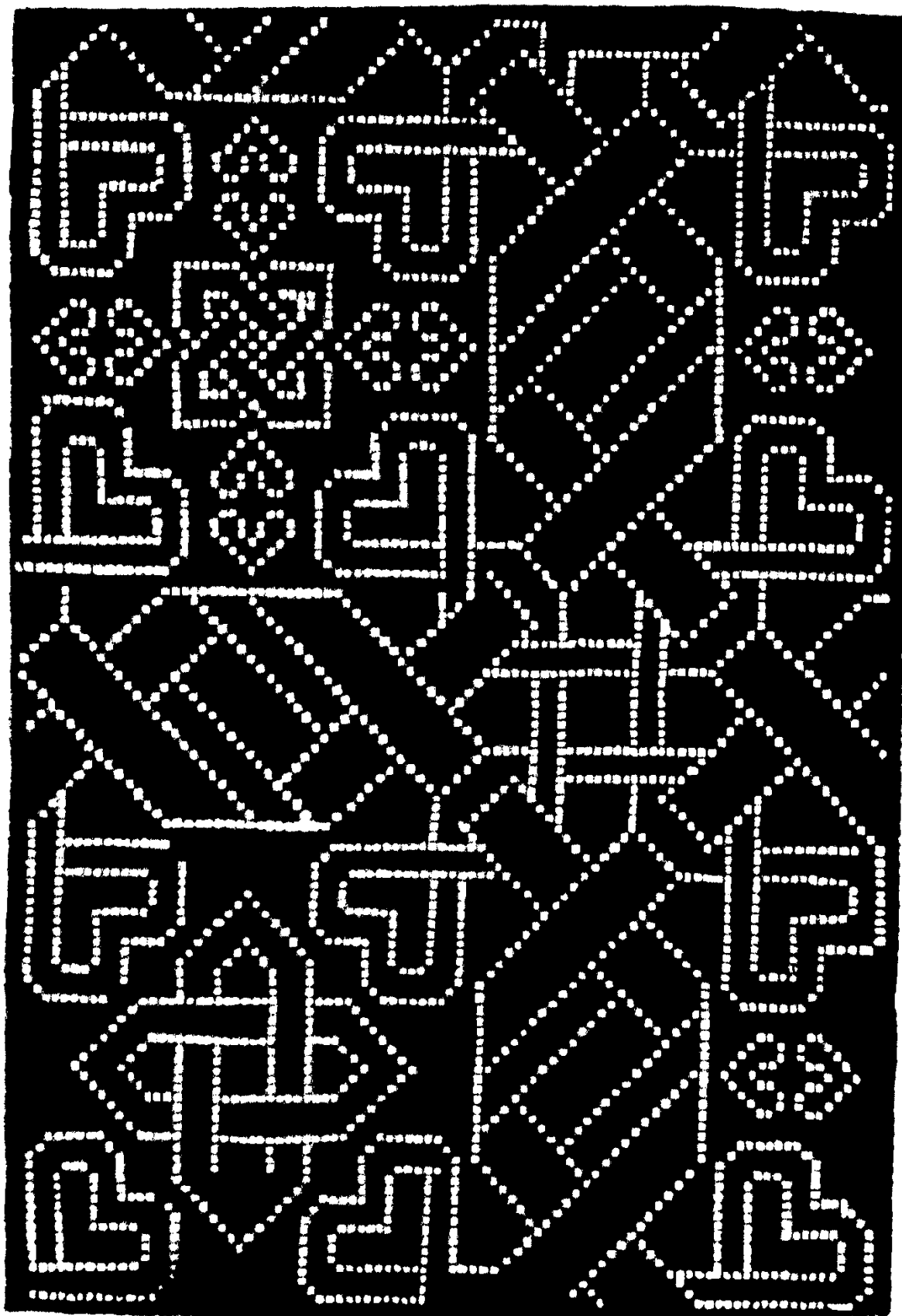
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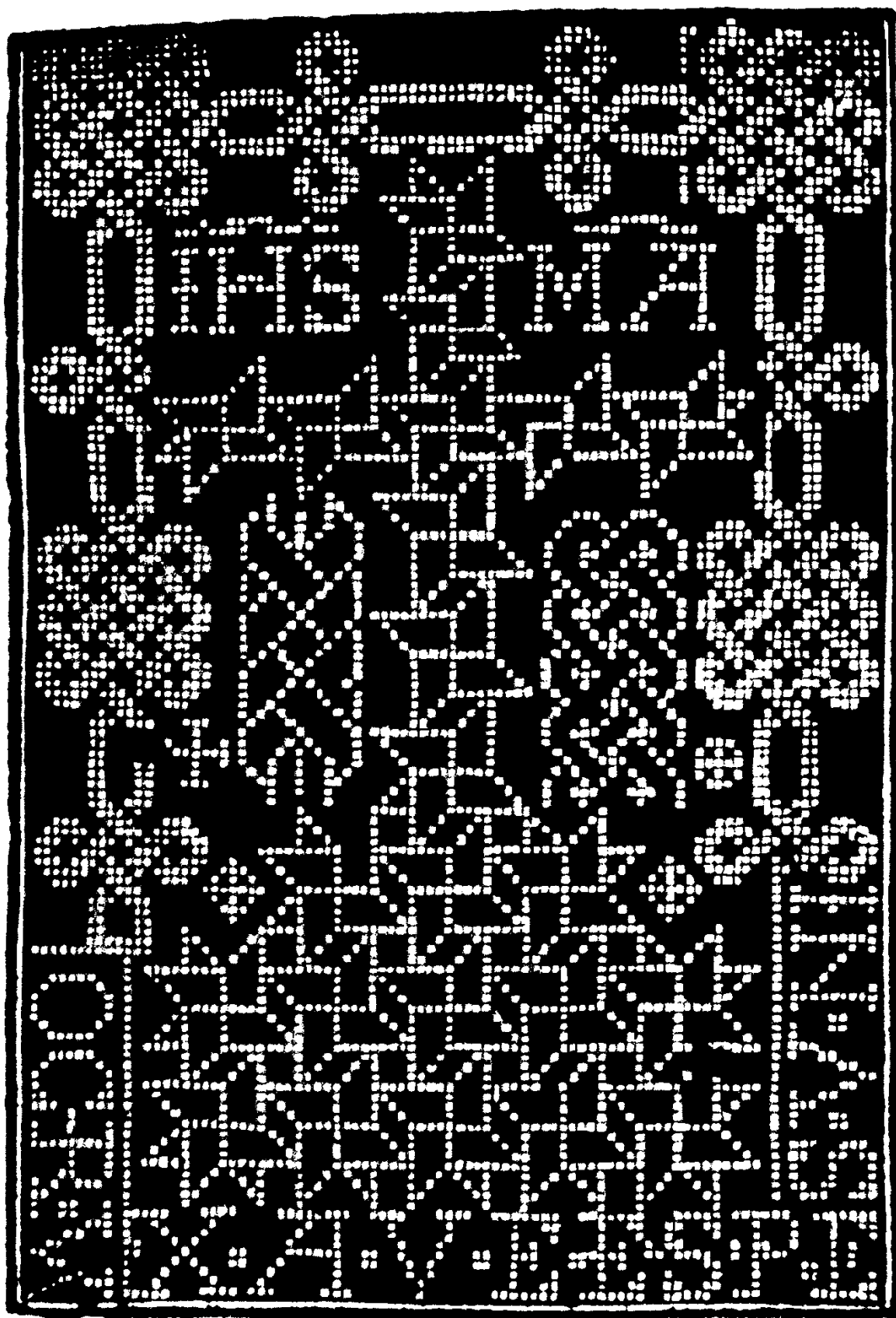
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